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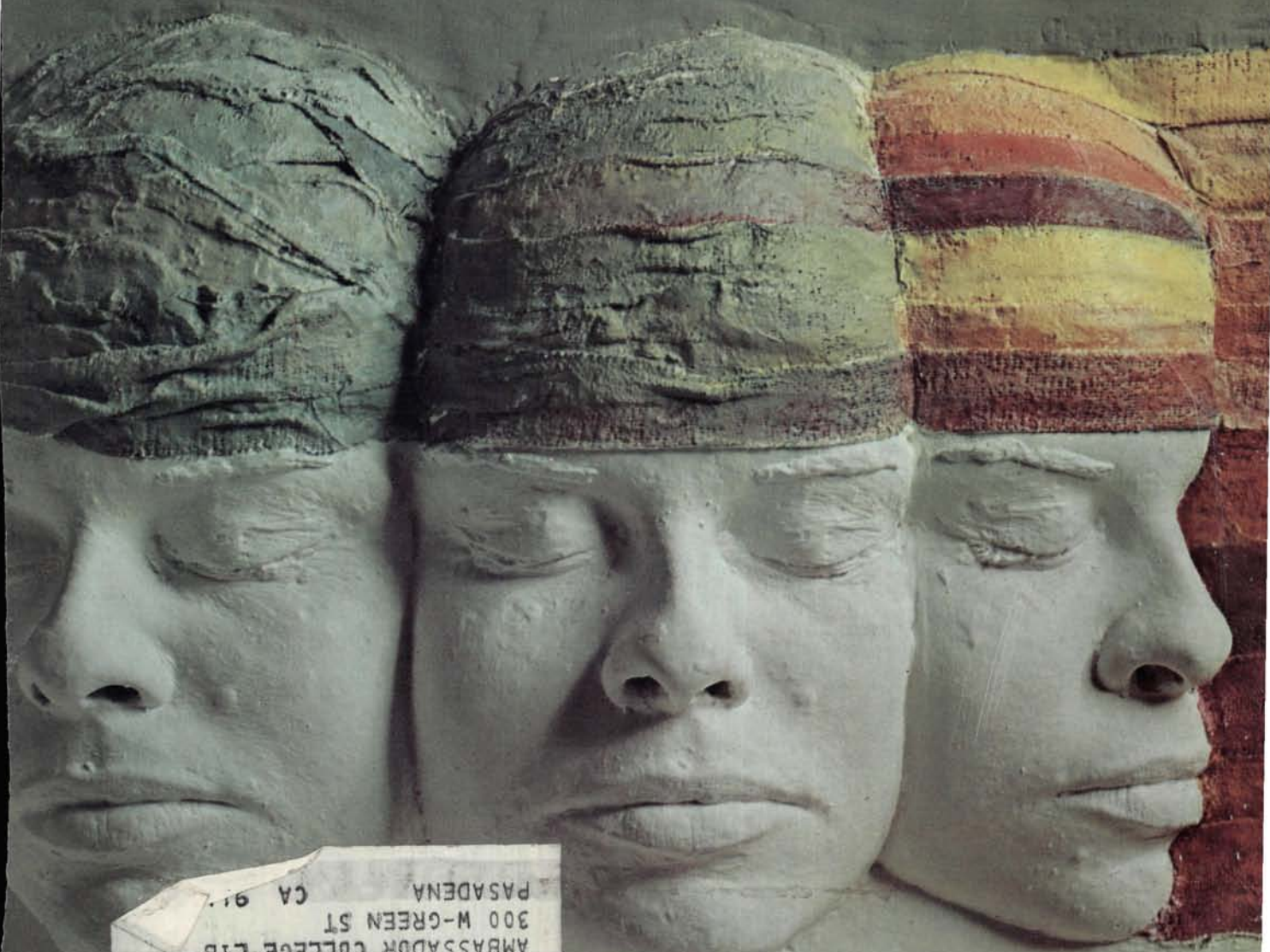
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MOST MEMORABLE BOOK: Low's Autobiography

LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Won the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartoons.

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ADAM SMITH 33 **The Meditation Game**
Try saying gazoom, gazoom

PETER BLAKE 52 **Can Technology Solve the Housing
Crisis?**
Prefabricated dream houses

SANFORD J. UNGAR 62 **G-Men: 1975 Style**
The ultimate cops

PAGE STEGNER 70 **Stalking the Wild Boar**
Some pig

WILLIAM MANCHESTER 82 **The Last Years of H. L. Mencken**
He went gently into that good night

FICTION

WARD JUST 46 **A Woman of Character**

WALLACE E. KNIGHT 75 **Making History**

POETRY

WILLIAM MATTHEWS 45 **The News**

RICHARD HUGO 74 **Letter to Kathy from Wisdom**

REPORTS & COMMENT

ANTHONY ASTRACHAN 4 **Poland**

SONNY KLEINFELD 14 **Auto Racing**

LIFE & LETTERS

ANDREW WARD 94 **The Pettifog House**

FRANK ROWSOME, JR. 98 **Apple & Beech, Birch & Oak**

BENJAMIN DEMOTT 100 **Culture Watch**

RICHARD TODD 104 **Books**

ROBERT MANNING AND 106 **Short Reviews**
AMANDA HELLER

PHOEBE-LOU ADAMS 110 **PLA**

THOMAS GRIFFITH 26 **Party of One**

28 **The Mail**

REPORTS & COMMENT

POLAND

Warsaw is studded with concrete symbols of the foreign forces that have influenced Poland over the centuries. The original buildings of the Old Town were modeled on sixteenth-century German architecture. They have been painstakingly reconstructed after being leveled by twentieth-century German guns. The Russians contributed an early nineteenth-century church and a late Stalin Era monument, the Palace of Culture, which is the tallest building in town. (The Poles joke that you pay a higher rent for an apartment with no view of the Palace.)

The Swedes have constructed two stark Swedish Modern buildings, an Inter-Continental Hotel and an international business center. The Poles jokingly call them "Sweden's Revenge"—for Poland's frustration of Sweden's imperial designs in the seventeenth century. American engineering inspired the freeways, built last year for the thirtieth anniversary of Liberation, but not the freeway bus stops, which were placed between entrance and exit ramps so that the buses block traffic coming on or off.

These foreign touches reinforce but do not explain something that I felt more in two weeks in Warsaw than I had in two years in Moscow—the aggregate human energy that is one definition of a city. The people of Warsaw convey a sense of having things to do and places to go, of hurrying as much because they want to as because they have to, that reminded me of Paris and New York. Not only in Warsaw, but in Krakow, which is to Poland the cultural center that Florence is to Italy; in

Gdansk, a Baltic port full of projects to revive Hanseatic glories; in Katowice, a smug, self-made metropolis of coal and steel. Even in Lublin, provincial in Stendhal's sense of the word, it is easy to find people who generate a feeling of willingness to meet a challenge. The feeling emerges sometimes as self-confidence, sometimes as suspicion of foreign trickery, but in both cases it suggests a readiness to cope.

A Warsaw journalist offers a simple explanation for this: Poland is the only communist country where popular discontent turned into violent uprisings twice in twenty years, each time forcing the party to replace one chief with another, without provoking Soviet intervention. "Nobody wants it to happen again, but everybody knows it could. Certainly, people hate a lot of things

about the regime, and they seldom affect what it does in the short run. But they have a sense of ultimate control over it. That makes us feel confident in other ways." It also makes Poland unique among the Warsaw Pact countries.

"Realism"

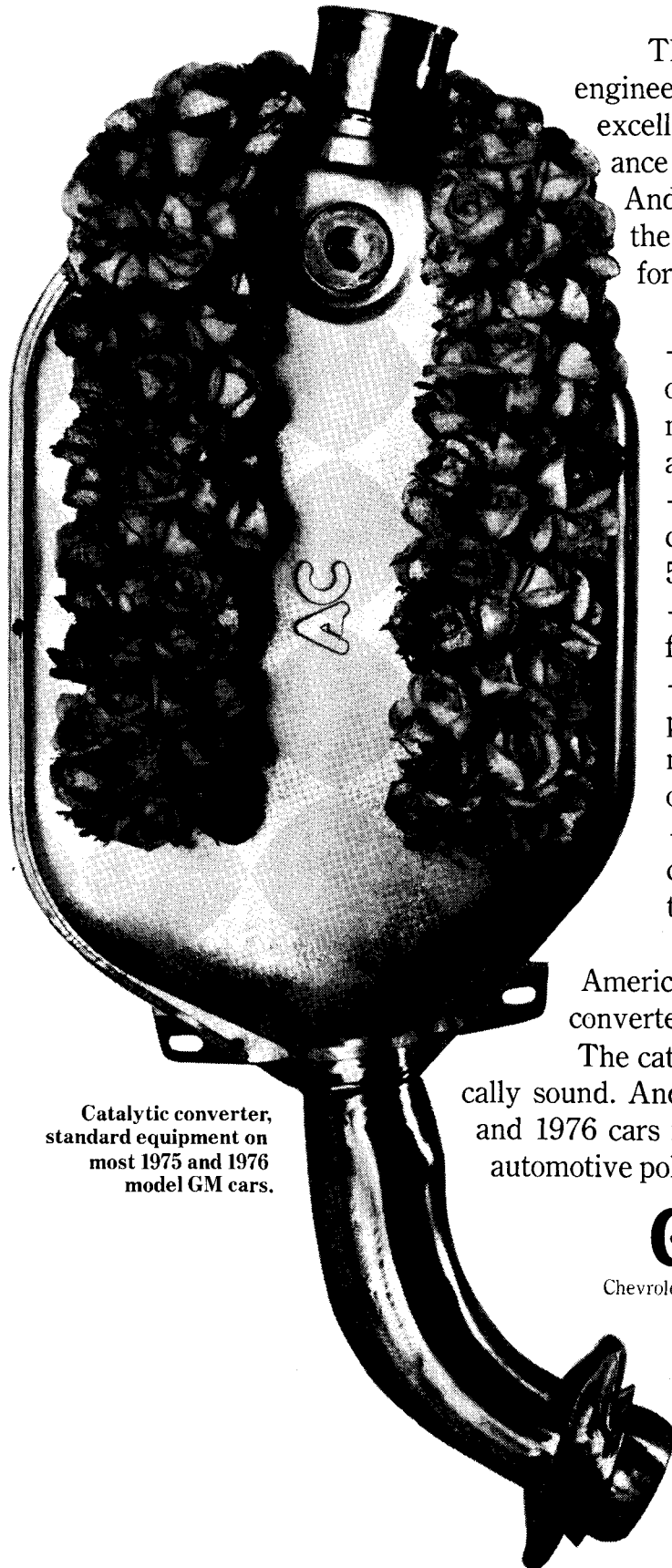
What the journalist means is that nobody in the Polish Establishment wants popular violence to be the country's only catalyst for political change. He was not claiming that every Pole is reconciled to the leadership of Edward Gierek, or even to Polish socialism. Indeed, the relationship between people and regime depends more on material things than on ideas and ideology. Both Wladyslaw Gomulka in 1956 and Gierek in 1970 rode to power on popular demand for a higher standard of living. Neither could fulfill the demand without broadening some areas of freedom and departing from the Soviet model. Gomulka decollectivized agriculture, and Gierek bought equipment and technology from the West, for which Poland owes \$3 billion in hard currency. But the desire for freedom has never been the driving force that it was in Hungary in 1956, or Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Westerners call the Polish approach "pragmatic," as distinct from "ideological," but many Polish Communists dislike the term. A Central Committee member remarked, "Kant said pragmatism is nothing more than the way in which you achieve your goal. Ours is a socialist society, so this pragmatism is not opposed to ideology." I had a slight sense of liberation, no more than a shiver, in hearing a Central Committee member quote Kant.



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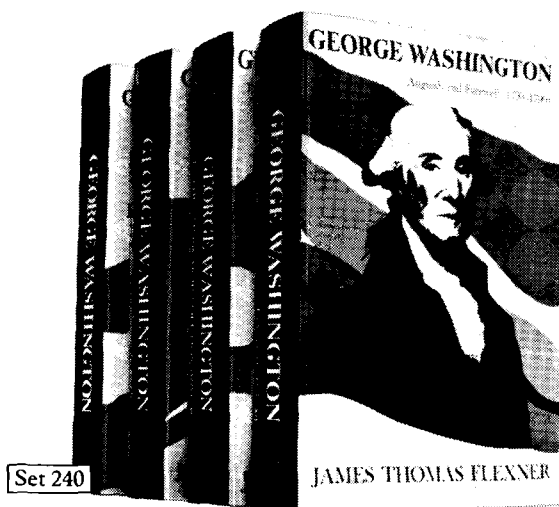
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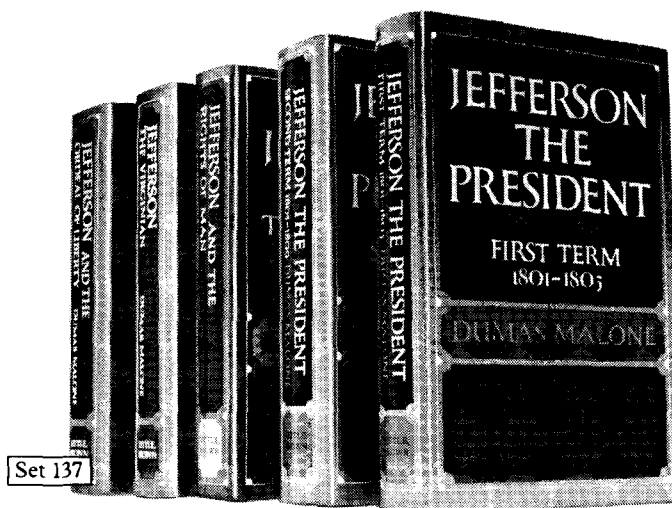
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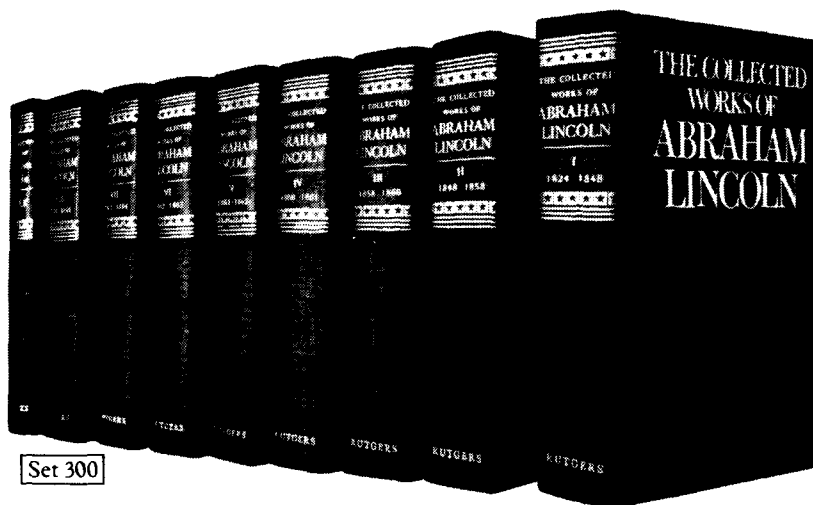
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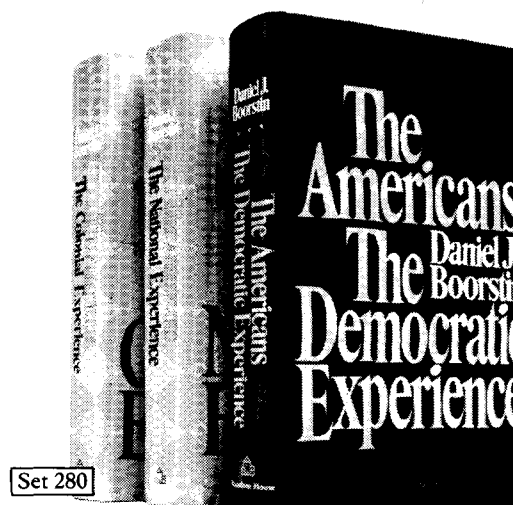
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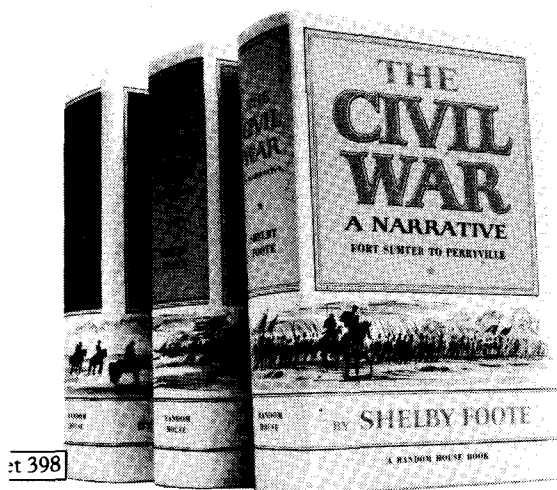
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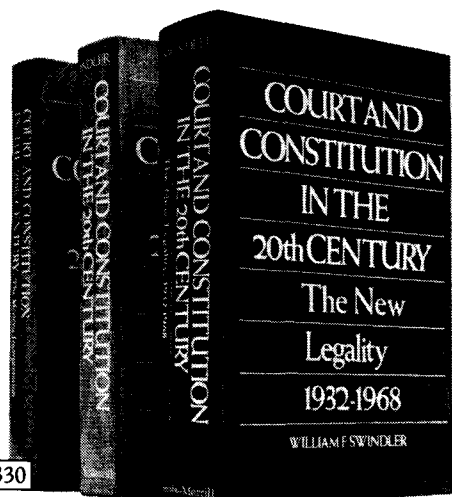
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POLAND

"Realism," he suggested, is a better word to describe the party tendency that resulted in the choice of Gierek over the authoritarian party politics of Gomulka and the nationalism of Mieczyslaw Moczar in 1970. One aspect of Gierek's realism is the rise in incomes—36 percent since he became First Secretary. The standard of living has improved, though consumer goods are still scarce by Western standards. Food is more plentiful than it was five years ago, but buying meat can still mean standing in line at the butcher's for two hours. Housing has improved, but people must wait seven years to get a state-owned apartment (the waiting period for co-ops is shorter, but few have the money). There is one car on the road for every fifty inhabitants, a high ratio by socialist standards; but Warsaw motorists must book appointments three weeks in advance at any service station that uses tools more subtle than a hammer or a chisel.

People on the streets of Warsaw wear the same jeans and corduroy fashions seen on the streets of New York. In fact, Poland exports clothing to American department stores, but though an American can choose among a hundred styles, a Varsovian must choose among five or ten. The combination of improvement and insufficiency results in expectations that rise as fast in Poland—which economic convention labels a developed society—as they do in the Third World.

New generation

Economic realism produces more than consumer goods, however. Finance Minister Henryk Kisiel told me that the people who have come into the labor force since 1970 are "different from the peasants who were plucked from the soil to work in the steel mill at Nowa Huta in 1950. They had been educated and they had to have better jobs than Poland was able to provide. If we had put this new generation to work in nineteenth-century factories, they would have cursed us."

The need to satisfy the new workers, and the need to modernize the economy, were motives for buying new factories, such as the one that the British firm of Massey-Ferguson-Perkins is designing for Ursus Tractor in a Warsaw suburb. It will cost \$450 million, lent by

British banks for repayment by the export of tractors. Poland's huge coal resources will help pay off the foreign debt before the new factories begin to produce their exports. This should prevent inflation from crippling economic reform in Poland as it has, for example, in Hungary.

Two young engineers I met present contrasting pictures of Kisiel's new generation. One was less interested in his work than in his hopes that economic realism may lead to wider political freedom, and his doubts that those hopes will be realized. He regularly reads Western newspapers and magazines, which are available in international clubs in most large cities (a diversion for the educated that is not available in the Soviet Union or Rumania), but he has not yet visited a Western country. (More than 672,000 Poles did travel in the West last year, a large number for one of Eastern Europe's highest-status pleasures. Poland makes obtaining exit visas relatively easy for people who have hard currency. Western friends to put them up, or the ability to travel on the \$140 they are allowed to buy with their zlotys.)

The young man and I talked at lunch in one of the privately owned restaurants that are among Polish socialism's concessions to consumer pleasure. Both their ambience and their food are more enjoyable than those of public restaurants; the best one in Warsaw has a clientele of conspicuous consumers from high levels of government and industry, familiar to anyone who knows American expense-account gourmets. I was delighted to learn that the name of a delicious dish I ate one night in Krakow translates literally as "veal cutlet bourgeois style" (mushrooms, herbs, and cream gravy).

My companion would not drink because he was driving, and Polish traffic laws are strictly enforced. Even so, drinking is the popular pastime that it is in all the Baltic countries. As a result, there are recurring campaigns against alcoholism, which fortunately have done nothing to lower the quality of the many excellent Polish vodkas. Polish beer is better than Russian, but not so good as the Czechoslovak product. Coca-Cola is available in some cities, Pepsi-Cola in others, by international agreement, but most of the Poles I met prefer Polish mineral water.

The other engineer I met was involved in planning the new northern port at Gdansk. He had clearly had

many occasions to rehearse his story of rapid construction, rational development in conjunction with a new oil refinery, and the search for modern technology around the world. He displayed a readiness to cope not only with Western technology but with what he described as the Western habit of raising prices once a buyer has committed himself to purchasing a particular piece of equipment. Now, the port management waits for foreign suppliers to bid first, and retains the option to switch at the last minute if a new supplier comes in with a better offer.

Church vs. state

Gierek's realism has also had an effect on the party's coexistence with the Catholic Church. Ninety percent of all Poles are practicing Catholics. The party allows them to go to church, so long as they attend in a parish other than the one in which they live. The Polish armed forces are the only troops of the Warsaw Pact with chaplains. A small Catholic party holds seats in the Polish Parliament. There are fewer church-state quarrels now than in Gomulka's day, because Gierek wants to keep the emotional weight of the Polish Church on his side, and the Vatican welcomes the opportunity to keep religion alive in a communist country.

The man in the middle is the Primate of Poland, Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, who is said to be ambivalent about normalizing church-state relations because he believes that the Church is renewed by oppression. The Communists seem to believe it, too. "Wyszyński wants to be a saint, but we will not help him," says Piotr Karpiuk, a former first secretary of the Lublin province party committee who has recently been promoted to a position in Warsaw. "Restrictions on the Church make Catholics seem like martyrs, or like a valid opposition. The Church is weaker in the United States because there are no restrictions."

Karpiuk, one of the hundred most important men in Poland, admits that Catholic priests really know and care how the people live. The proof to him is the priest's testimony that ordinary people live better now than they did before World War II, which Westerners agree is certainly true. He also praised the Church for teaching "certain things, like 'Don't kill,' 'Don't bear false witness,' 'Honor thy father and mother.'" Karpiuk never mentioned the Ten Commandments by name.

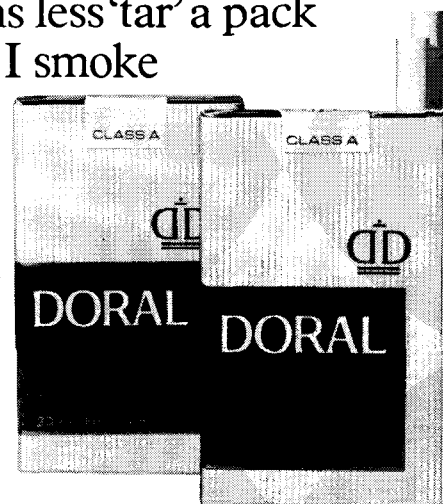
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POLAND

Mieczyslaw Krapiec is a Dominican monk who is rector of the Catholic university in Lublin, which he calls "the only private university between Berlin and Tokyo." He, too, thinks that it is dangerous for the Church when the party is too kind. But he is glad that the party accepts the national importance of the Church. "We didn't expect to have such a strong Church after thirty years of communism," he said. "There are two reasons we are strong. One is that we were Catholic for a thousand years. . . . Second, during the one hundred and thirty years of partition, our common faith held the nation together. It's not only a matter of faith but something political: to be a Catholic is to be a Pole, and vice versa."

Krapiec says that the university's most important role is to keep an alternative to the Marxist solution alive in the nation's culture. He makes the modest boast that the Catholic university is the only one in Poland that still has a faculty of philosophy. The others were abolished or reduced to the lower rank of institutes (which have less autonomy

than faculties and are often restricted to research rather than teaching) "because philosophers think from time to time." Many students who were expelled from Warsaw and Poznan universities during the 1968 troubles transferred to the Catholic university.

Several young Polish priests reportedly favor another alternative—the reforms of Vatican II and the "liberty" of the Church in France, Germany, and Holland. Wyszynski and the bishops oppose some of those ideas on doctrinal grounds and some on the grounds that they weaken the Church for confrontation with the regime. The party is said to encourage reform on the one hand, so that the quarrel between priests and bishops will indeed weaken the Church, and to support the status quo on the other hand, lest the young reformers turn out to be capable of making the Church too strong.

The identification of Poland with Catholicism that Krapiec cites is one cause of the traditional anti-Semitism in Poland (which Krapiec denies ever existed). The Polish partisans refused aid to the fighting Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto during the Nazi occupation. And in 1968, the political struggle between Gomulka and his antagonists erupted in a flow of official anti-Semitism that forced thousands of Jews, many of them veteran Communists, into exile.

There were 3.3 million Jews in pre-war Poland, roughly a tenth of the total population. About 250,000 survived the Holocaust; most of them died naturally or emigrated to Israel. But there were still 30,000 when the blow fell in 1968. Today there are no more than 7000 Jews left in the country. Many, especially the young, have concealed their Jewishness so well that they are barely conscious of it themselves. There is no rabbi in Poland.

The country is thus almost as *judenrein* as Hitler could have wished. Poles of all kinds become uncomfortable when asked how it happened. The most common answer is that many of the postwar Stalinists and secret police were Jews who inevitably came to arouse hatred, a comment that recalls the traditional excuse that medieval anti-Semitism existed because medieval Jews were moneylenders.

But the Poles make gestures. Karpiuk and Krapiec both spoke of Jewish contributions to Polish culture. "Passover Slivovice," its label bearing an endorsement in Hebrew from the Union of Re-

ligious Communities, is a fashionable after-dinner drink. The Yiddish theatre in Warsaw stages lively performances, audiences listen through earphones to a simultaneous translation into Polish.

There is a huge monument on the edge of the old ghetto area to the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto. Auschwitz and Majdanek are major tourist centers. Auschwitz has been turned into a museum, which makes it more depressing than horrifying, except for exhibits such as a room piled high with human hair that the Nazis sheared from their victims. The guide keeps citing proofs that the Germans never really intended Auschwitz to be a labor center, as though today's tourists might take seriously the carefully preserved gate with the bitter legend, "*Arbeit Macht Frei*." The memorials at neighboring Birkenau include stones inscribed in Hebrew and Yiddish.

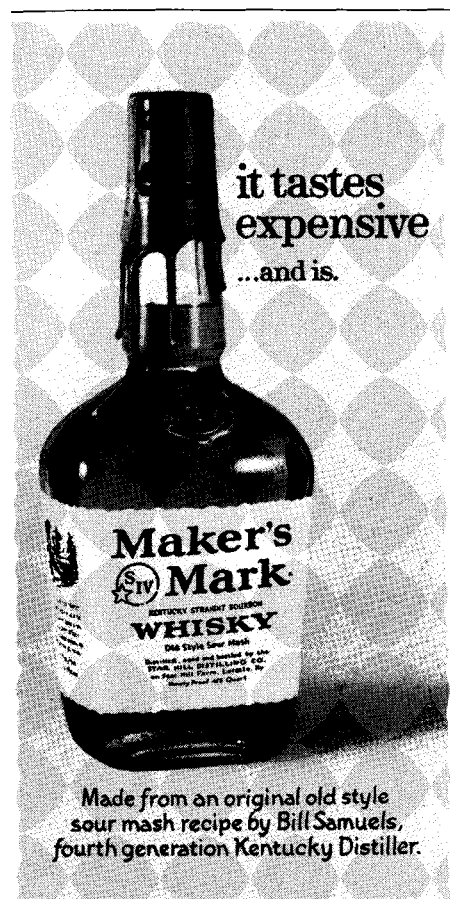
Poland, in other words, acknowledges its past, giving further evidence of realism and one more contrast with the Soviet Union, where the tiny marker at Babi Yar does not mention that the victims were Jews, and where schoolbooks never tell of the plight of the Jews.

Man of the people?

Another aspect of Gierek's realism is his effort to keep up with what people think. He frequently makes visits to factories and mines, without pomp or outriders. He strikes both public audiences and private acquaintances as a man who is still as much a coal miner as an *apparatchik*. When he visits these places, he listens as often as he speaks, and he pushes his subordinates to do the same thing. Skeptics consider this sort of going to the people to be both Big Brotherism and public relations gimmickry, but many Poles and Western diplomats think that Gierek is sincere.

In the summer of 1974, for example, the dock workers of Gdynia and Gdansk (the same Baltic workers whose uprising overthrew Gomulka and paved Gierek's way to power in 1970) staged a campaign of slowdown and absenteeism to protest a new system of work rules that had been introduced without explanation or opportunity for amendment.

Gierek went to Gdansk, on the pretext of inspecting the harvest; he waited to see what local leaders would do rather than immediately intervene himself. The local party forced the port ad-



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POLAND

ministration to listen to the workers' ideas for changes in the proposed system and to accept many of them. The workers ultimately found themselves earning more money, though they had feared they would net less.

Tadeusz Bejm, the Gdansk party leader who presided over the resolution of the problem, was promoted this year to be the minister in charge of local government and regional economy. In that job, he will supervise the overhaul of the country's administration that Gierek decreed last May. The seventeen *vovoidstvos* (provinces) and 392 *powiats* (counties) were abolished and replaced by forty-nine new provinces, one level of administration taking the place of two. This will strengthen the central government, leaving local officials with less power in the newer, smaller provinces than they held in the old ones. The system will thereby make it harder for any local leader to challenge Gierek as he himself challenged Gomulka in 1970.

Even so, in the judgment of Poles concerned with modernization and of Westerners in Warsaw, the new system will enable the regime to keep more directly in touch with provincial opinion because it eliminates the *powiats*, which had become the petty empires of party hacks with a vested interest in hiding discontent. In addition, the system should enable the government to pursue modernization more effectively. Doing away with the *powiats* also eliminates one of the many levels of bureaucracy that frustrate foreign businessmen and Poland's new industrial managers.

Giving in

Not everybody thinks the new system is one more proof of rapport between the people and the leadership, however. Some intellectuals fear that the strengthening of the center will make it easier for Gierek's subordinates to isolate him from public opinion in order to protect their own interests. The doubters are also worried by an apparent tightening of control over the Polish press, which used to be the most independent in the Soviet bloc. They fear that Moscow is trying to prevent infiltration of Western ideas. Kremlin leaders are afraid that unsocialist notions might sneak in via the freer exchange of ideas proposed at the summit meet-

ing of the European Security Conference last summer, or by the import of Western goods and technology.

Poland sometimes yields to Soviet pressures in order to maintain cordial relations. The Soviet ambassador in Warsaw is a crass young party hack named Stanislas Pilotovich. When he tells the Poles that they must exhibit a cyclorama depicting Kosciuszko's 1794 victory over the Russians in Krakow, where it will be lost in a welter of tourist attractions, rather than in Wroclaw, where it will stand out, they go along. It merely confirms the contempt that many Poles feel for the "uncultured" Russians and for Soviet "colonization."

On the other hand, many Poles see the Russians as protectors against the Germans, with whom they have been conducting a love-hate relationship for two centuries. The Poles fear the Germans more than they fear anyone else; and yet they do more business with the Germans than with anyone else except the Russians.

Since 1945, Poland has made no significant departures from Moscow's line in foreign affairs. Assurance of Communist party control and adherence to the Warsaw Pact helped forestall Soviet intervention in 1956 and 1970. In the first case, Soviet troops were on the move toward Polish cities when the outgoing Polish leadership convinced Nikita Khrushchev that his soldiers would meet with resistance from the Polish army. He agreed that the new Gomulka regime posed none of the political dangers that were to bring Soviet tanks into Hungary a few days later. The troops en route to Poland were withdrawn. In 1970, Gomulka asked the Soviets to intervene to save him when the dock workers struck; the Soviets refused. Gierek has an obvious vested interest in continuing to give the Soviets no cause to intervene.

The editors of two weeklies prized by the intelligentsia were dismissed from their jobs last April, a result, some feel, of Soviet pressure. Gustaw Gottesman of *Literatura* was fired for printing too many pieces that were fashionable in the West, among them the scenario of *Last Tango in Paris*; the account of the cannibalism that helped members of a Chilean soccer team survive an airplane crash in the Andes; and Jan Morris' story of her transformation from man into woman.

Gottesman also made enemies by refusing to print articles attacking Alexander Solzhenitsyn and by trying, unsuc-

cessfully, to reply to articles in another publication that seemed to justify anti-Semitism in prewar Poland on economic grounds.

In the other case—the dismissal of Krzysztof Toeplitz from the satirical journal *Szpilki*—it was hard to discover any reason more specific than constant irreverence.

Poland's limited freedom of the press has gained as well as lost in recent months, however. There was a serious meat shortage early this year that caused considerable dissatisfaction. *Polityka*, the country's leading weekly, published an article on the meat shortage in March that admitted, after several pages of statistical and sociological sleight of hand, that the shortage had really been caused by poor performance in the state meat industry. The article was frank enough to startle connoisseurs of the communist press.

Three weeks later, *Polityka* printed a selection of letters from its readers that was more than startling. One said, "For thirty years, we have become used to misinformation in the press, but your article was the limit. Do you really consider your readers a crowd of simpletons, or only fools?"

That kind of outspokenness astonished the analysts. They concluded that Mieczyslaw Rakowski, the editor of *Polityka* and a Central Committee member, was trying to make Gierek live up to the principle that the leader should know how the people feel. Some ideologues were furious, but it turned out that the original article had been written with the help of aides to Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz, and Gierek himself reportedly defended Rakowski's decision to print the letters. A leading Polish journalist said, "If you are a non-conformist, you have to expect some trouble. If you are a conformist, the government says you are a nice boy, but they really despise you. Every journalist, every editor has a choice."

No conflict

So does every creative artist, a fact of particular significance in Poland, where theater and film seem even more important to educated people than in the United States, and an international theater festival brings out a large audience night after night after night.

Jerzy Grotowski is the director of an experimental theater company in Wroclaw. His vitality and talent have won him worldwide acclaim, but the price of

his nonconformity is that the company has been seen by more audiences abroad than in Warsaw, where Grotowski is treated as a provincial eccentric.

At the moment, the best film and theater directors are immersed in historical rather than contemporary drama. One moviemaker explained this by saying that the regime's censors will not allow realistic conflict in a contemporary film—conflict, say, between today's professors and today's students. Historical films, on the other hand, may show Poles of other centuries in conflict among themselves or with Swedes, with Tatars, with Germans, with anyone except the Russians, Poland's most frequent historical antagonists. Conflict makes the best drama, so there are many historical plays and films.

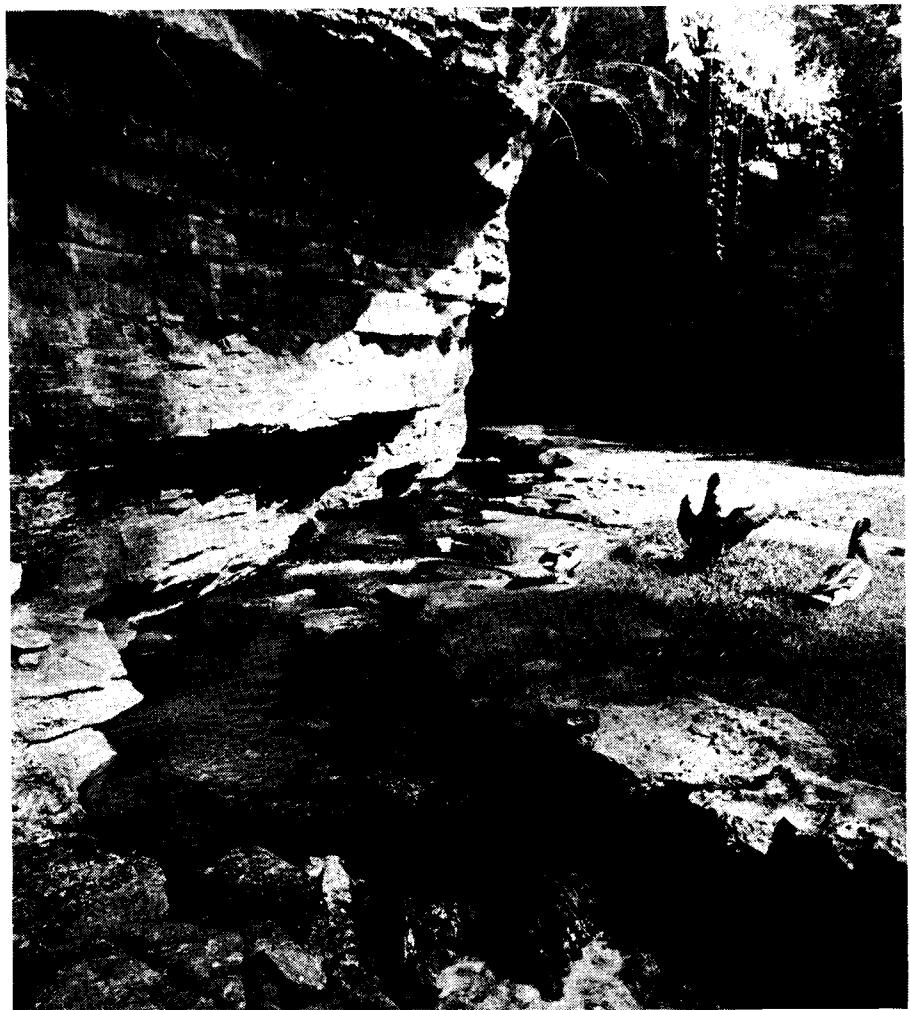
Andrzej Wajda, the best-known Polish film director since Roman Polanski went West, says that artists don't avoid conflict so much as they do realism. Most of the nineteenth-century writers who helped keep the Polish language alive during the years when the nation was partitioned were romantics. Polish audiences still prefer romantic history to contemporary realism. Wajda says, and contemporary films in Poland say less than historical ones about essential problems.

Wajda has just made a historical film based on what he calls the only realistic novel of the years of partition, Wladyslaw Reymont's *The Promised Land*. It is the story of a Polish aristocrat who becomes the first Polish industrialist by setting up a textile factory with two partners, a Jew and a German.

To Wajda, the film's central problem is the characters' concern with money. "When I started to make *Promised Land*," he said, "I realized that in thirty years no film hero had had anything to do with money. If someone even bought something in a store, you wouldn't see him pay for it, or if he paid, he would never have to wait for change. That was not realistic."

Wajda has also directed an important historical drama on the stage, a play about Danton and Robespierre, written in the 1930s. It brings to life the ideological conflicts of the French Revolution, which echoed down the years of struggle between Stalin and Trotsky, in a way that would be impossible in any Moscow theater. The production is a perfect example of the way in which the freedom allowed by Gierek's realism is genuine even though it is limited.

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AUTO RACING

Automobile racing is one of the most popular games people watch. During 1974, big and small circuits in the United States pulled in an estimated 48 million spectators, almost 1.5 million more than the year before, and more than watched any other sport with the exception of horse racing, which offers the added lure of pari-mutuel gambling. Major league baseball, for instance, drew 31 million fans last year (about 300,000 fewer than in 1973).

For many years, the Indianapolis 500 has been attracting the biggest crowd that annually comes together for any purpose in America: more than 300,000 spectators. That is three times the number who attend the Super Bowl, and almost twice the size of the Kentucky Derby crowd. Several other car races regularly bring in more than 100,000 fans.

Who are all these people? Middle-class adults are much in evidence at car races, but usually only at major contests. Car racing for the most part draws a young and predominantly blue-collar crowd, lumpy-knuckled, short-fused, simple folk, who turn on to speed and risk.

The prospect of fiery, metal-tearing crashes is ever present. Racing combines the grim fascination of the Circus Maximus, the panoply of the medieval joust, and the chanciness of Russian roulette. To aficionados, it is the ultimate test of man and his machines. For these reasons and others, auto racing has styled itself the "Sport of the Seventies."

"Burning money"

Despite its popularity, car racing is going broke. With the huge costs for the sleek machines escalating more rapidly than the cost of living, the wealthy benefactors who turned racing into a potent entertainment institution have begun letting go of their large holdings. As one old racing hand puts it: "Motor racing is like a drowning man, with but one hand left on the raft."

Nothing about motor racing is cheap. To campaign a car for a year on the Indianapolis car trail, the pinnacle of American car racing, a driver needs \$500,000 to \$1 million. Fifteen years ago, \$30,000 would have sufficed.

Offenhauser or Ford-Foyt V-8 en-

gines go for \$32,500. A chassis costs \$40,000, a set of brakes \$2000. A Grand National stock car, the sort that tears around the banks at Daytona and outwardly resembles the Plymouth that rumbles down the expressway, costs \$250,000 to maintain during a season of racing. Twenty thousand dollars fetches a Cosworth Ford V-8, the compact engine for Grand Prix cars that race on four continents for the Formula I championship. Fifty thousand dollars acquires the Porsche Carrera GT that competes at Le Mans. That amount is merely a down payment on the Porsche 917-30 that participated last year in American road racing and is the most expensive racing automobile ever built. It listed for \$225,000. Seventy-five grand would buy a spare engine.

And racing is a risky enterprise. That \$225,000 Porsche might well be reduced to a pile of rubble its first trip around the track. There is no collision insurance for racing cars. In this day of retrenchment and conservation, the great cars are, not surprisingly, being faulted as reckless toys of the very rich.

"There's not much question that racing costs have gotten totally out of whack," says Parnelli Jones, an affable and articulate car owner who won the 1963 Indianapolis. "We're just burning money out there. We need some quick decisions to cut back the costs of race cars, but . . . nobody is sure what to do. I used to race three cars, and now I'm down to two. I can't be sure I won't have to back off to one soon."

The effect of such madness on races is a dearth of cars. A record low thirty-nine machines showed for this year's California 500, one of the three star-studded contests on the Indy circuit. The Indianapolis 500, racing's showpiece event, saw only sixty-one entries this year, down from the customary hundred. Last year at Trenton, nineteen cars (out of an advertised twenty-four) took the green flag in the Trentonian 200. A record was set for the fewest finishers—four. Only a demolition derby could make that figure lower. Cars fortunate enough to arrange financial backing are being forced to bear insignia peculiar in a sport accustomed to promoting spark plugs and motor oil. One Indy driver found himself behind the wheel of the Alex Foods Tamale Wagon.

What is more, events are being canceled altogether. For nine years, the Canadian-American Challenge Cup Series stood as the foremost competition for

sports cars on this continent. Purses topped \$100,000, though the chief appeal was the cars. The mammoth, two-seated Monsters were the fastest road cars in the world. Thundering down the straightaway, they could attain speeds of 250 miles an hour, and no corner existed around which they could not slither at over 30 miles per hour. Because of inflation, money can no longer be found to build these exotic machines, which require a quarter of a million dollars to develop. The series was terminated this year.

Late-model stock car racing is suffering from similar disaffection. Theoretically, this is a cheap form of racing. The cars—Plymouths, Fords, Dodges—look much like the ones in dealers' showrooms. But since they must go 180 or 190 miles an hour (a passenger car that will do 95 is a fast car), they are not alike inside. Through a process known as blueprinting, the vehicles are dismantled and doctored until they are brought up to stringent racing standards at great expense. No longer willing to foot the bill, General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, and American Motors have all abandoned racing.

In the haughty world of Grand Prix racing, the factories that assemble the low-slung, wide-wheeled cars are almost all gone. Only Lotus and Ferrari remain from the lustrous days when countries sponsored squads of cars and when victorious drivers were honored by respectful monarchs. Small specialty makers now dominate the field. The cars are freakish, looking for all the world like enormous doorstops.

Only this year, France's Matra concern, blaming the "economy of the Western world," bowed out of the craft of race-car building. Its cars had scored victories in the last three Twenty-four Hours of Le Mans, and had taken the last two world manufacturers' championships. Not since 1950, when the government of Charles de Gaulle funneled \$1 million into the Matra firm, had a French machine captured the classic. In 1972, a Matra at last popped the cork on French champagne at Le Mans. But by then De Gaulle was already dead.

Scores of speedways, which even in palmy days found profit elusive, are verging on bankruptcy. Major circuits can stage only two or three events a season without satiating the public. Rain-outs are frequent, and few fans return for rain dates, which invariably lose money. The problem is marginal

profits in an industry whose most important variable, the weather, is an act of God. Tony Hulman, who owns Indy, told me that with expenses what they are, the famous arena merely "carries" itself.

Stop to consider the sorry saga of the \$25.5 million Ontario Motor Speedway in California, racing's own white elephant. Completed in 1970, it is the handsomest, most modern racing facility in the world, and the costliest. The original managers bailed out, drowning in red ink; a group led by Parnelli Jones took over. A complicated bond structure administered by the city of Ontario reckoned the daily cost of the track at \$4000, more than racing could afford. Last year, a rock concert was staged there, drawing 190,000 fans. Ontario, however, didn't warm to the sort of spectator attracted, and banned future festivals. The Jones contingent, just months ago, abandoned the track.

Rubber

The most calamitous blow to the sport thus far was the defection this year of Firestone Tire & Rubber Company from involvement in all major racing forms. Firestone's affiliation with motor racing dates to 1911, and hardly any other firm has been as unswervingly loyal. But its annual racing budget had bulged to an estimated \$8 million, 150 percent above its budget ten years ago. In a period of plunging profits, the company got tired of explaining this lunacy to shareholders.

Firestone produced 100,000 racing tires in 1974. More than 150 varieties are manufactured, different ones for every track. Though many speedways appear identical, racing tires are so sophisticated that the rubber run on at Indianapolis may be ineffective at Ontario. Different tires are used at Daytona for the track's February race than are used at its July event on the same surface, owing to the changed weather.

Racing tires are typically fourteen months in the development. Designs are fed through computers, and before it is mounted on a car, every tire is X-rayed to insure that no foreign matter is embedded in it. In pit areas, instrumentation is monitored to show the temperature of tires on the speedway (they can get as high as 300 degrees). At first, tire firms relied on racing as a testing laboratory for passenger tires. Nowadays, racing tires have no practical application. Says Bill McCreary, Firestone's

director of racing, "That makes it pretty hard to justify putting on the party."

Goodyear is the last American company supplying racing tires here and abroad; it has given no assurance that the same economic forces that squeezed its competitor out of racing will not knock it out. It is no secret that Goodyear is retrenching this season without Firestone's competition, and with reason. What is the point of blowing wads of money competing against oneself? Goodyear wants to be convinced that motor racing can regulate its own chronic inflation, something it has not yet demonstrated it can do. One way would be to standardize racing tires as much as possible. Doing this would reduce the sophistication and effectiveness of tires—something lost on the general populace, anyhow—but it would lower costs dramatically.

The present economy is not the only cause of the ominous problems at work in auto racing. To begin with, racing in the last decade has acquired a predilection for spending money that would embarrass an Arab sheik. In the innocent days of ten or fifteen years ago, any individual of modest means could purchase a racing car, and many did. Then racing began to catch on in a big way. Industrial firms, sensing the bountiful publicity value the sport had to offer, were anxious to spend their fortunes on the proposition that one car could go faster than another. Ford, Chrysler, Firestone, and Goodyear clambered aboard the bandwagon and, between the years 1964 and 1969, re-

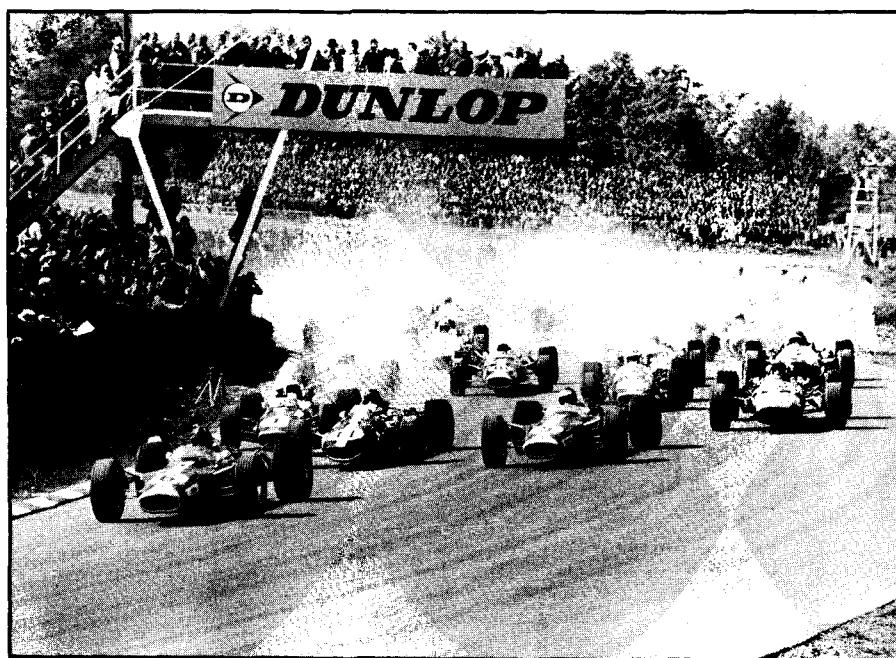
portedly sank \$200 million into the sport. Racing cars became motorized, 200-mile-an-hour billboards, and a driver's chances of victory on the track were dictated by the amount of green in his sponsor's billfold.

The enormous quantities of money pumped into the sport began to have a debilitating effect. Racing became a technological revolution out of control.

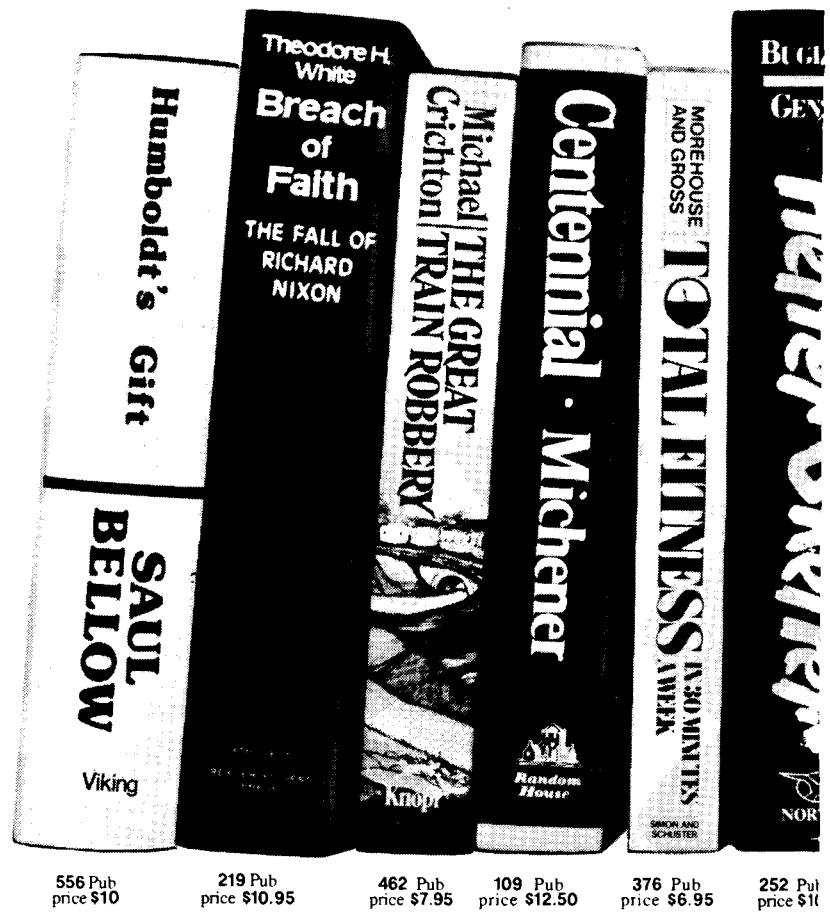
Too much speed?

Modern racing cars are among the most complex creations on earth. The snout-nosed Indianapolis cars are a smorgasbord of 5000 components, some no larger than a match head. Their chassis, like airplanes, are built on a stressed-skin principle. Two small spoilers are mounted at the front and a large wing at the rear. In effect, these are upside-down airplane wings; they reverse the lift that causes a plane to fly, and thus force the car down onto the track, increasing traction. Two-way radios enable the driver to communicate with his pit crew. New this year is a telemetry system which, through electronic sensors installed in the car, feeds into a pit-side computer data relating to various car functions—the ride height of the wheels, forward and lateral acceleration, air inlet temperature. With gimmicks like these, the cars must be toiled over ten hours a day, all year long.

Grant King, an Indy car builder and entrant with strong views on the sport, says: "When the big factories got involved in motor racing, they made us



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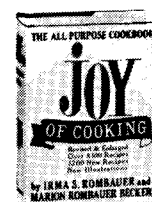
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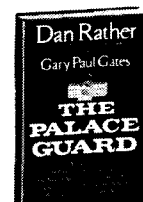
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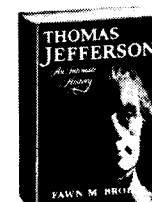
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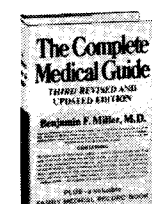


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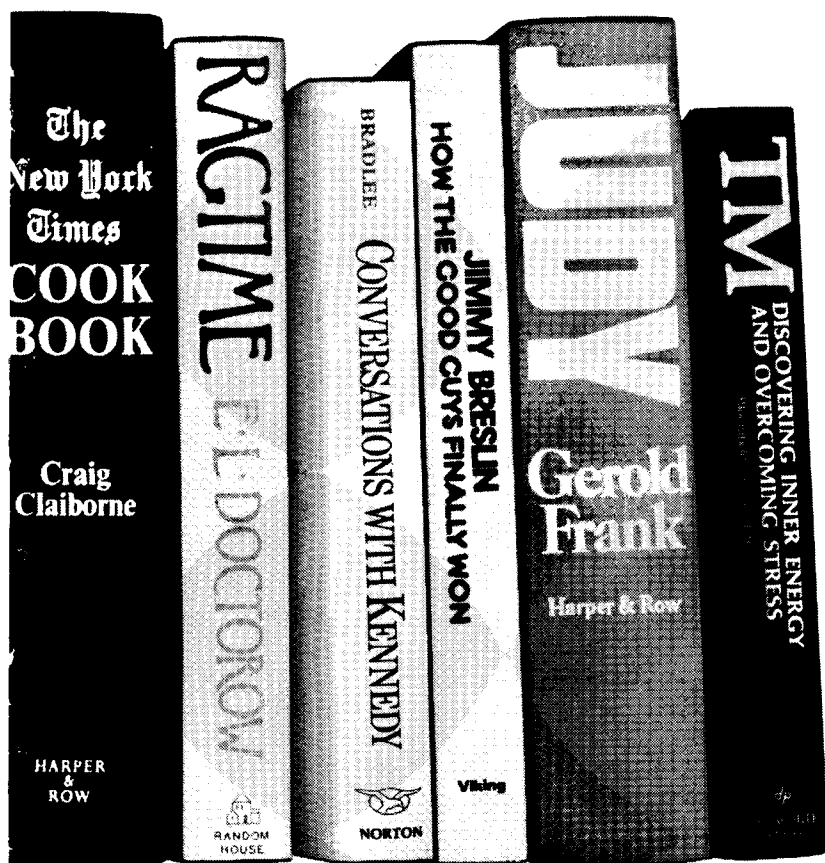
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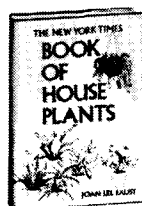
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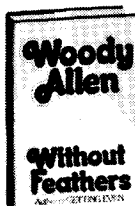
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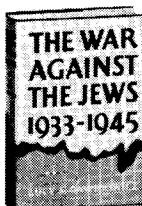
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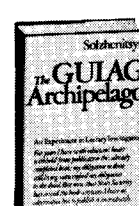
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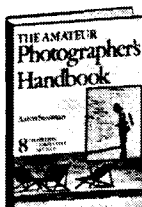
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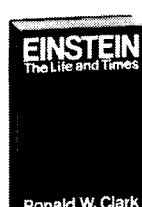
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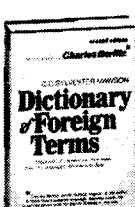
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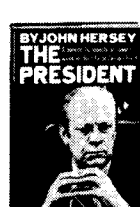
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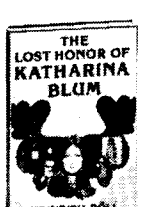
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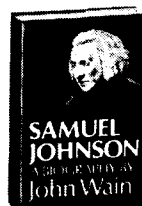
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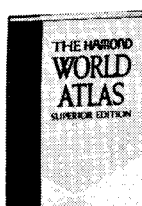
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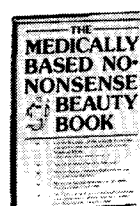
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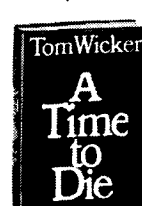
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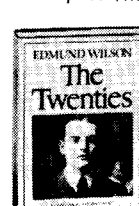
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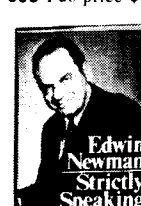
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475 Pub price \$7.95



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598 Pub price \$15

AUTO RACING

go to the moon. . . . Now, with our dealers deserting us, there's been a withdrawal and we're going into cold turkey. We've got to try to get back to the previous independent state, if we don't die before we get there."

Car makers have always pursued the false and seductive idea that speed is all-important. Speed has become the index of a car's achievement. With dogged persistence, builders have chased the figure which answers the question, How fast can a race car be?—never recognizing that most fans would be content with the answer, Pretty fast. During their expensive hunt, builders might have paused at some point and asked a more sensible question: Is it good that the cars go so fast? The answer is No.

Cars whizzing along at today's wicked speeds—200, 225, 250 miles per hour—fail more often than slower-moving vehicles. Engines are like hand grenades: they can stand so much stress, and then they explode. There are so many parts that can malfunction. Worse, today's misbegotten missiles have drastically diluted the value of the driver, once the most important ingredient in a winning entry. The famed Stirling Moss used to pride himself on dusting off the competition even when he was driving inferior machinery. He could never do so today.

The art by which great drivers are trained is a mysterious one. It involves a superlative blend of eye-hand control. The steering on a racing car is the equivalent of a hair trigger on a gun. In his cramped cockpit, the driver is cooked by heat, dulled by fumes. The wind tears at him. The noise batters at him. The engine may be pumping 800 horsepower. The driver's well-being is dependent on such vagaries as the flight trajectory of birds (a bird can knock a man out at high speed).

Driving a racing car once required skillful, rigidly controlled movement. Now, a driver needs only modest skill and a lead foot. The art has faded. A host of mediocre drivers have come into prominence for no other apparent reason than that they have well-crafted machines. The loser is the spectator who wants to see outstanding driving skill, not the genius of engineering.

When I first started going to motor races, they were conducted mostly on small dirt tracks up to a mile in length, their curves modestly banked. The

straightaways were short, forcing cars to bunch up fiercely on the corners. There was a lot of bammin' and frammin' as the cars circled the track. They screamed down the chutes, emitting thunderous roars. The herd hurtled into the turns in a fantastic blur of dust, heat, noise, speed. As the cars churned around the turns, they drifted into long, graceful slides. At the peak of the maneuver, their front wheels were sideways to the direction in which the cars were traveling. The colossal rear tires kicked up magnificent rooster tails of dust. It was one of the most spectacular sights in sport.

The single-seat cars of those days were something a driver could rattle around in. The cockpit was cut so that it exposed the driver down to his waist, enabling spectators to watch his arms flailing as he wrestled his machine around the track, and to identify him as he raced past.

Dirt tracks steadily gave way to parking-lot surfaces, which didn't need constant watering and frequent resurfacing. Big speedways, as long as two and a half miles, with curves tilted as high as 34 degrees, have become the order of the day. They look like bobsled runs. Cars don't slide around the corners, or toss up rooster tails. They are set below their wheels, a scant three inches above the road. Drivers lower themselves into the cars, wiggling down with their arms over their heads. The driver wears the cockpit around his neck. All that is visible is the top of his helmet. And though they lap tracks much faster, the cars make less noise. Old-timers talk about that bygone noise, those glorious bounding cars. At current speeds, the sleek cars flick by so quickly that on-lookers can barely see them.

The high speeds also needlessly raise the peril to drivers. The racing car is a killer, and always will be a killer. It has been killing drivers since 1898, as soon as men were able to prod the speed of their rickety machines over 30 miles per hour. Death can be the price a racing driver pays for his glory.

It is impossible to achieve riskless driving, or what is known in racing as "cotton wool." But the death rate will always reflect responsible work at the drawing board. In cars that move at today's speeds, the driver has little margin for error. Cars are often not much bigger than the drivers they encase. When they hit anything, they tear like cardboard. If a driver loses control, the odds are great that he will die.

Sheer speed can be detrimental. Drivers competing on the world's fastest closed circuit—the Alabama International Speedway—have complained of dizziness, chest pains, momentary blindness, and nausea. Engineers, after labored study, linked the maladies to a unique effect called "pogo." First discovered in the beginning stages of the Gemini space program, the pogo effect is the result of harmonic vibrations coupled with severe gravitational pull. Many drivers have been loath to compete on the track, and who can blame them? Racing is supposed to be a test of skill, not a dice game with death.

Racing also kills its spectators. It has been killing spectators since 1903, when the Paris-Madrid race was halted after a dozen persons, including some drivers, perished. The average speed of that race was 65 miles per hour. Nothing, unfortunately, can make racing entirely safe for fans, unless they are shoved so far away and protected by so many walls and ditches that all drama is eliminated. If this were done, spectators wouldn't come and motor racing would surely stop. But the faster the cars travel, the greater the chance they will crash and the greater the terrain they will tear across.

"The speeds we're making just aren't good for racing," cautioned Peter Revson in 1973. Less than a year later, he fulfilled his own warning as he practiced for the South African Grand Prix. On a slippery track, his car plowed into an unyielding retaining wall, and Revson was killed.

Pomeroy's Law

From the beginning of the sport to this moment, the toughest competition has been not between driver and driver but between the manufacturers and the governors of the sport. The men of authority, ever mindful of carnage (the 1973 Indianapolis 500, for example, took two drivers' lives), would like the cars slowed. But they say that they are reluctant to brake them too much, for fear of boring the spectators; an odd position, since many spectators are bored by the cars' going too fast. Sometimes national or corporate or vested interests have also acted, but the forces in favor of cutting speeds win only the skirmishes, never the battles.

Wings on the rear of Indy racers were trimmed, slowing them slightly. Restrictor plates were required on the carburetors of stock cars, with minimal

impact on their velocity. Last year, limits were clamped on fuel allotments in the hope that cars would be slowed in order to achieve better mileage, again with little effect. (Race cars get as little as 1.5 miles to the gallon, but rarely run on the sort of gasoline pumped at the corner station. Nitromethane, methanol, and benzene are the most common fuels.)

Year after year, on every race circuit in the world—Watkins Glen, Daytona, Pamplona, Monte Carlo, Nurburgring—speeds keep rising, as if so dictated by irrevocable law. Such a law actually exists. It is called Pomeroy's Law, after a respected British authority on Grand Prix racing. He demonstrated that the velocity of racing cars rises annually by a fixed percentage. On a gross basis, the years 1906 to 1975 have seen maximum speeds rocket from 93 to 230 miles per hour for Formula 1 cars. There is no end in sight.

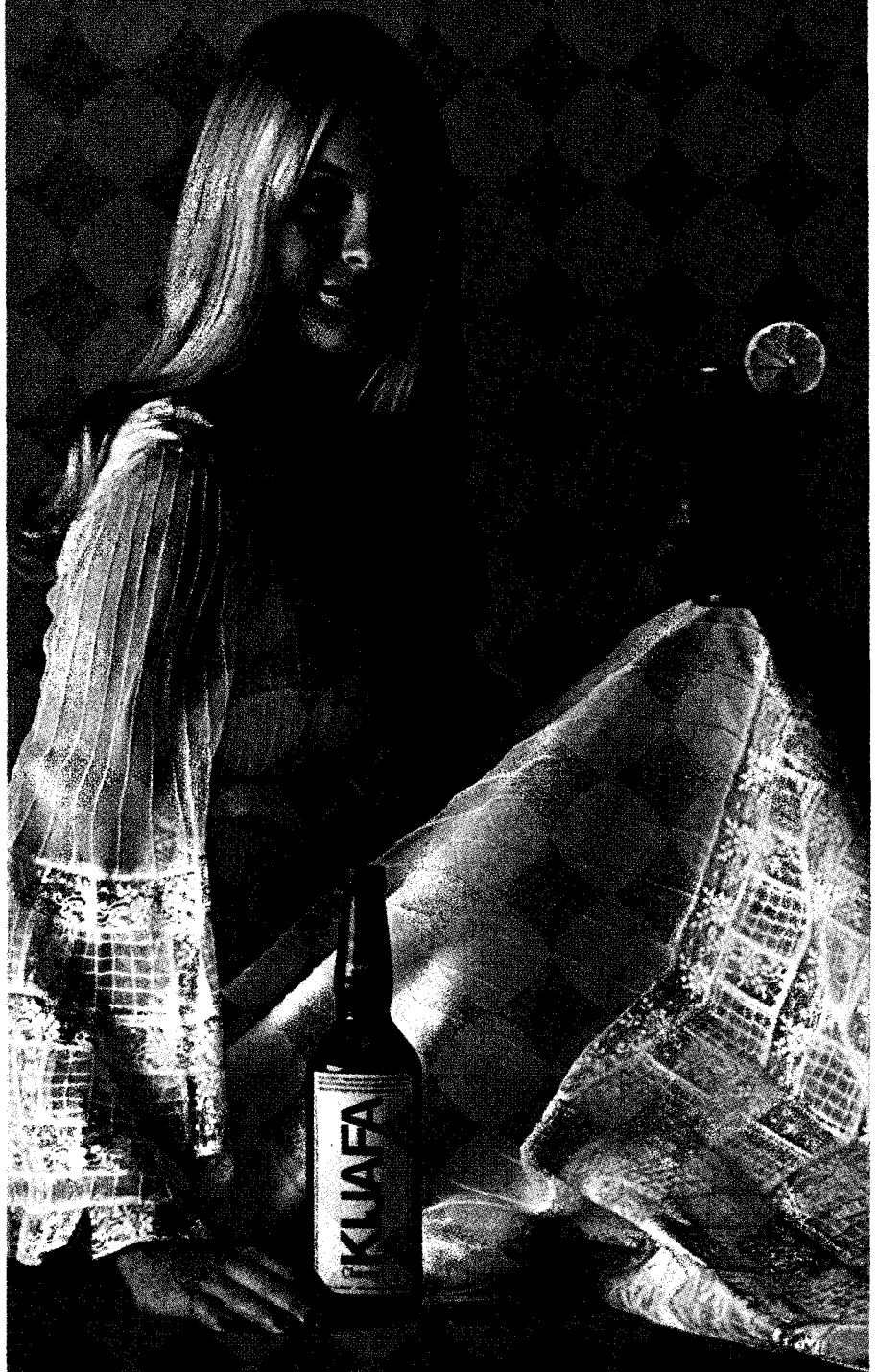
Some feel that the solution is to return to the older stock block piston engines. These cost about \$8500, compared with \$32,500 for an Indy car engine. They consume less fuel. They emit fewer poisons. The idea has been discussed for some time.

After years of dithering, the United States Auto Club (USAC), which governs Indy racing, adopted rules which, by restricting turbocharger boost, will give stock block engines an equal chance against the newer engines. However, no one is totally certain that the older engines can withstand today's brutal racing conditions.

Most racing people chalk up the state of the sport to the confusion of governing bodies. Five principal sanctioning bodies, and scores of lesser agencies, monitor auto racing. All of them seem to spend more time wrangling among themselves than they do attending to racing. While the sport was in its early stages, a rivalry developed between USAC and NASCAR (the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing), which regulates Grand National competition. "It's a hard part of the donkey to pin a tail on, but the blame has to be put on the sanctioning bodies," says Dan Gurney, a highly successful car builder and Indy-car owner. "They keep making unrealistic rulings that serve only to hurt the sport."

In order to achieve effective revisions, Gurney and others think it necessary that the sport's committees of officials be supplanted by a single commissioner, one with wide-reaching authority. If

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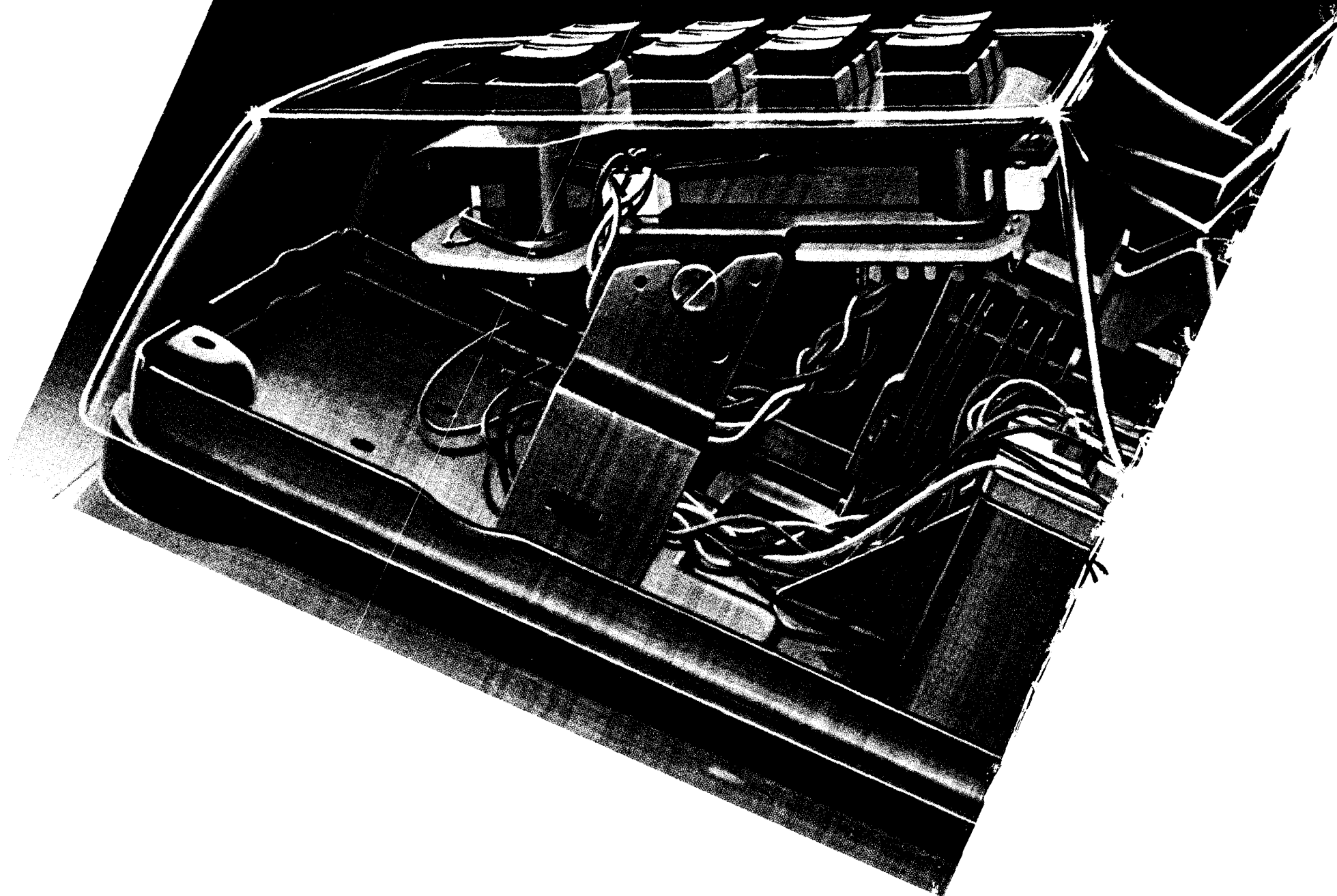


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AUTO RACING

such radical revamping is not to happen, then the present bodies will surely have to achieve harmony. It is of the first importance to develop a sensible philosophy about what constitutes good racing and what doesn't, so that the rule changes will become less capricious, and more clearly understood and accepted by the drivers and fans. "Right now, racing is a sport in the Dark Ages," remarks a former speedway owner. "It has yet to see rational management."

Romance crisis

Concern over exorbitant costs and death rates has tended to overshadow the fact that contemporary car racing also suffers a romance crisis. Racing is a cruel, tough sport, spattered with blood, reeking of oil. In the past, however, it was peopled with men of great dash and courage, who gave it grace, verve, and glamour: Joachim Bonnier, a dark-bearded Swede, who ran one of the world's finest art galleries; Phil Hill, the only American world champion and an

authority on the player piano, who owned 4000 piano rolls, including a Rachmaninoff concerto played by Rachmaninoff himself; Maurice Trintignant, mayor of a town in France and owner of a vineyard; Eddie Sachs, who could have been a marvelous stand-up comedian; Count Von Trips, who owned a castle in Cologne and outside it parked his racing Ferrari, a car which later carried his coffin through the town to his grave.

In those days, the racing driver was a mythical figure who had to settle for more glory than cash, but he did not complain. There is little that compares to the sheer joy of putting a racing machine through a difficult maneuver and bringing it off perfectly. Drivers adored racing's glamour and excitement, and did not ask further rewards.

Cars have since acquired such undreamed-of complexity that drivers with technical competence are needed, who can aid in the arcane areas of design, gear ratios, aerodynamics, tire structure, and grooving. Purses have skyrocketed. Racing drivers are now among the highest-paid athletes in the world. The best of them pocket as much as \$1 million a year. The modern driver wears

flashy suits, and commutes to races in his private plane. He lolls about luxury hotels, invests in fast-food chains. He tends to view race driving as a desperate endeavor, since he sees it principally in economic terms. He is not much concerned with the aesthetics of the sport, or with its history. "We're all in this for the money," A. J. Foyt told me. "Racing is a business, just like any other profession. It just happens we risk our necks."

Of course, race driving expresses itself in various other less visible and less exotic forms—modified stock cars, sprint cars, midgets, dragsters—where something less than a rajah's ransom is necessary to produce competitive machines. Whatever fate befalls the Indy cars and the Daytona stockers, car racing's minor leagues should at least perpetuate the idea of motor sport, if not allow the highest test of driving skill.

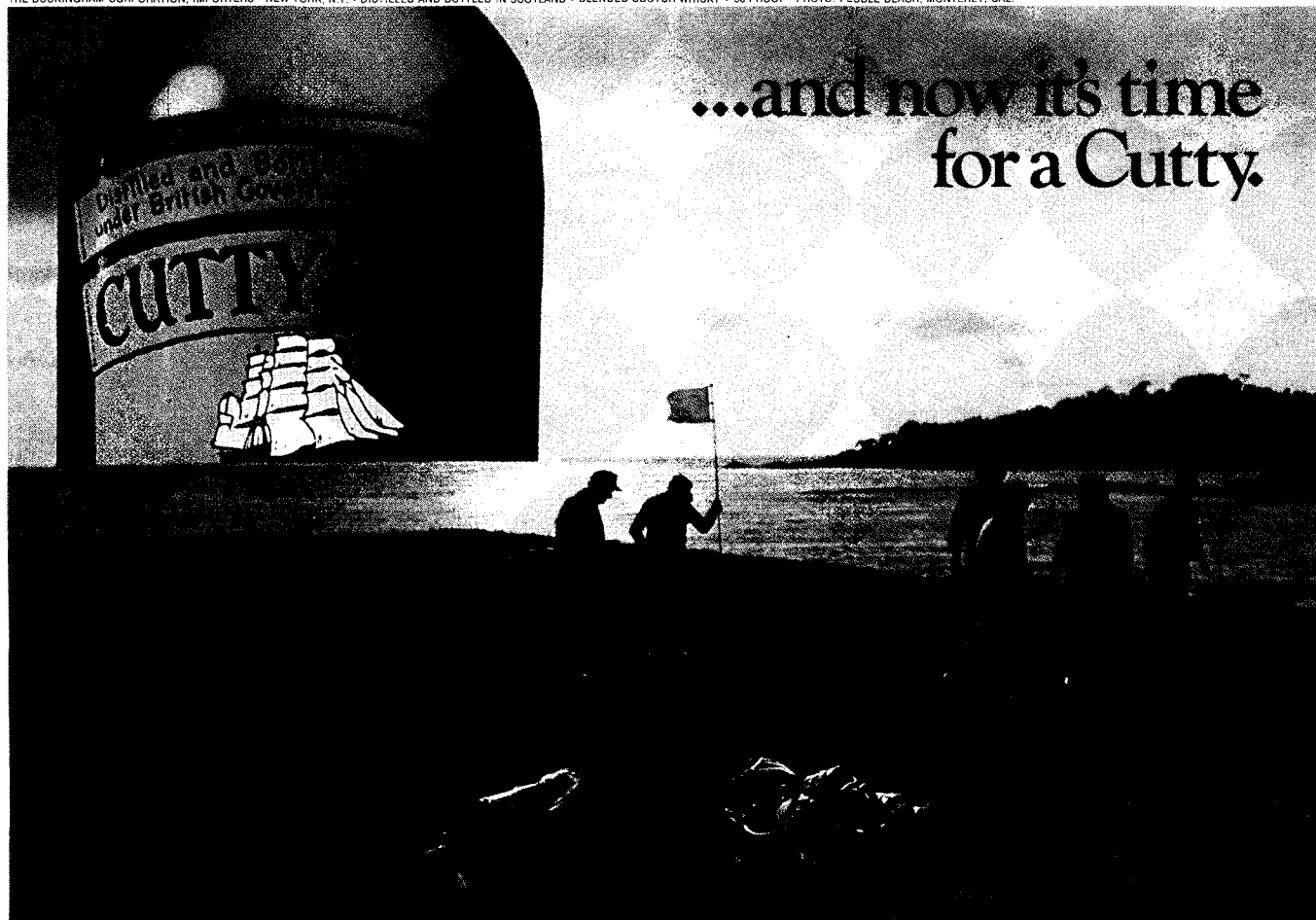
—SONNY KLEINFELD

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Jets and Jeans



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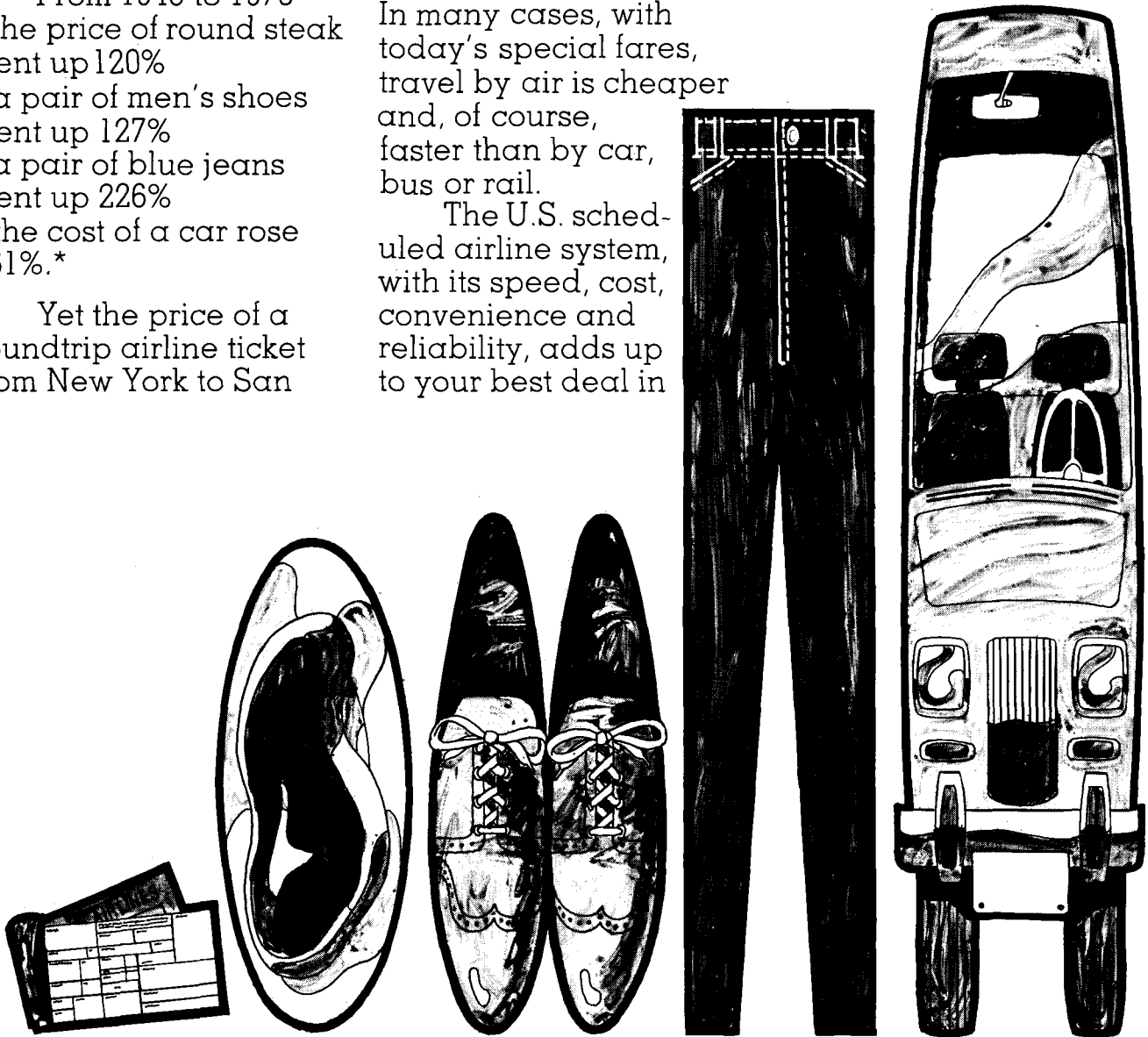
Yet the price of a roundtrip airline ticket from New York to San

Francisco during those 27 years rose just **18%** — and you get there twice as fast. During that time the average airline fare went up **22%**, while the overall Consumer Price Index rose **123%**.

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*Source: Consumer Price Index & manufacturers. Air fares as of August 15, 1975

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Wallace: A Politician to Live Without

by Thomas Griffith

Have you ever imagined what it must have been like to live all your life during the long reign of one of those powerful kings that Shakespeare or the historians tell us about? The random oppression itself—the cruelty of soldiers from which there was no appeal; the arbitrary judgments of bristling little bureaucrats bursting with royal authority—this would be the awful, unchanging reality. But I wonder whether the fact of having the *same person* on the throne would, in the end, get you most. Even in this impatient democracy of ours, we have to endure public figures longer than we should. Franklin Roosevelt stayed too long. I know friends who dread the prospect of an endless dynasty of ambitious Kennedys. For myself, I have long resented Richard Nixon's thirty-year presence in my life—that clever, persistent, furtive, nasty, and inescapable presence. Now that we no longer have Nixon to kick around, now that we don't have to put up with him kicking *us* around either, I have a new candidate for political oblivion: George Corley Wallace.

The infuriating thing about George Wallace is that though he is never going to get the office he pursues, the very fact of his being in every presidential campaign is enough to lower the tone, confuse the issues, and add to the prevailing despair about democracy. He continues high in the Democratic polls. Ronald Reagan makes sheep's eyes at him. Teddy Kennedy made a pilgrimage south not too many moons ago to share a platform with Wallace. Ford acknowledges that on domestic issues, his views and Wallace's "have many similarities." (I'd respect Ford more if he

had stressed their dissimilarities.) Nobody in public life likes Wallace personally, and he has never attracted a first-rate political figure to his side, but politicians avidly covet the audience he gathers. William Rusher, the publisher of William F. Buckley's *National Review*, talks of forming a new political party which would join Buckleyite economic conservatives with Wallace's "social conservatism"—an unholy and unlikely merger, if I ever heard one, of snobs, fat cats, and the resentful lower-middle class. George Wallace might not be able to hold his own at a Buckley salon in such intellectual company, but he does have an intuitive, beady-eyed suspicion of ambitious respectables. His turf is not for sale or rent; he goes with the lease.

He learned of all varieties misjudge Wallace. Seeing his capacity to give an audience red meat to feed on, watching as his rasping, whiny voice, coming from a distant, bullet-proof podium, rains down from loudspeakers, stirring up crowds, intellectuals have seen in him the native American fascist leader whose coming Sinclair Lewis foretold. Those who felt this way must have thought it proper retribution when a man who lived by inflaming passions was shot at by an assassin—but poetic justice is not that symmetrical, and the nut who shot Wallace had been just as prepared to shoot a different target a week earlier.

Wealthy right-wingers, likewise misjudging Wallace, have been willing to underwrite him, hoping to manipulate him to their own ends. Wallace is too disorganized to pull off anything by himself, and too cantankerously himself to be delivered to someone else's line: he would feel uncomfortable away from his own reading of the crowds he plays and sways so well. For what makes Wallace so formidable, and yet so ineffectual, is that he is only a reflector, a thermostat of the wintry state of the world. He has the demagogue's finely tuned sensitivity for what turns on audiences and touches their nerves. He is their discontents, disappointments, and resentments given raucous voice, the Pied Piper of the Sick and Tired vote. He is calculating and cunning, of course, but he understands the crowd's prejudices because he shares them. He is good at articulating discontents, but hopeless at remedying them.

You can look in vain through his speeches for any real program; it comes

to no more than "sending them a message" up in Washington, which—like such other Wallace applause-getters as threatening to stand in the doorway at the University of Alabama, or to run over demonstrators—is bravado without content. The only time I ever spent with George Wallace (it was before he was shot), I found him to be a restless, cocky little bantam, quick of tongue, moody, capable of grave, attentive courtesies to my wife ("Now you've met the American Hitler," he said to her at the end of our visit), at moments almost likable, but untrustworthy, menacing, flashily cheap, and—though one knew better—touching.

I tried to elicit his views on some of the subjects any President lives with—defense budgets, détente, the Middle East, taxes—and found him surprisingly indifferent, uninformed, and incurious about them all. I wonder whether he even reads such news in the daily paper. His responses were at the level of the loudest mouth around a filling station or a firehouse: instant, unconsidered, dogmatic. Marshall Frady, who has made a fine biography out of a mingled fascination and alarm at Wallace's "almost innocent rapacity," concluded that, as a person, Wallace was curiously substanceless: "What one briefly glimpses of him on television is really all that he is every day of his life, from waking to sleeping."

Wallace's identification with his audience is at once weakness and strength. Attack Wallace and you are attacking "all you good people" in the audience, on whose behalf Wallace bravely stands up to the big folks, "those, eastern moneyed boys that look down their nose at every southerner and every Alabaman and call us red-necks, woolhats, pea-pickers and peckerwoods." His scorn for the hifalutin', and his gift for ridiculing it, makes fine theater; the crowds can't hear often enough about those pointy-headed intellectuals who are unable even to park their bicycles straight, those bureaucrats with peanut butter sandwiches in their briefcases. "Hell, we got too much dignity in government now, what we need is some *meanness*." He is a connoisseur of weaknesses, and knows well the intellectual's guilty secret: "They don't have any faith in people. A lot of them don't really *like* people, when you get right down to it." How are you going

Thomas Griffith's latest book is *How True*.

to separate such a man from his audiences?

But he is their prisoner, too.

Maybe he doesn't dare to learn more about any subject, or study and reflect upon it, for fear that this alien knowledge of the complexity of problems would separate him from his crowds. So all he can do is declaim grievances, not respond to them. Now, you may believe that, as politicians, such men as Ford, Humphrey, Muskie, Jackson, and Udall are tedious, wrongheaded, or uninspired, but at least each, after years in Congress, understands how public debate shapes itself, knows the context and confines of issues. Not George Corley Wallace. He has only invective to offer.

Hear him talk: "We want a national leadership that does not condone or explain away lawlessness." Or: "I want treasonable acts punished!" (Who doesn't?) Wallace is a master of the disconnected comparison: "The Supreme Court says it's okay to send obscene literature through the mail, but won't let little children bow their heads in prayer." Listen to his foreign policy: "If I were President, I would demand some respect. You wouldn't look me in the eye and spit in it—and if you did, I'd spit back."

Perhaps he has never been quite so effective since he lost segregation as a subject. I remember, in 1971, having just toured Mississippi, remarking to Wallace that Mississippi seemed to be accepting desegregation. "Accept, yes—but they don't like it," Wallace replied. "And if I could promise to change it and be believed, I could beat any candidate in sight." That admission of the limits on how far he could go struck me as an epitaph for George Wallace.

And now Wallace's 1976 theme is "the survivability of the middle class" against all its enemies. Senator Thomas McIntyre of New Hampshire once complained that Wallace's speeches are long on criticism but short on solutions. McIntyre is, of course, right, but Wallace has a demagogue's ready answer: "It's pretty hard to find solutions to clean up messes that he and his colleagues have created."

If George Wallace had any real hope of winning the presidency, you'd think he'd prepare himself for it. But it's only the race that matters to him, or rather, the attention, the power, the adulation of his followers, the enmity of the proud, the crowd excitement he

generates, the reckless gambler's need to see how far he can take things. The only flaw in this exercise is its futility. This may be why he seems more subdued when he is going through the old motions.

Governor Edwards of Louisiana is convinced that beyond a sizable minority of voters that Wallace has locked up, Wallace "runs out of gas." Others have tried to steal his followers. Nixon once used innuendo to play on the same crude emotions of Joe McCarthy's anticommunism, while professing himself statesmanlike, and later used busing to signal himself a white-collar Wallaceite. You don't beat Wallace that way, you only lower yourself. But just as big a mistake is to dismiss Wallace's people as yahoos, galoots, and bigots. Wallace himself knows better than that; he never forgets the meanness in people, and plays to that, yet he never condescends to them, either. When he talks about "Poles and Eyetalians, good people like that" up North, "the workin' folks all over our country who're getting fed up," the plant workers, insurance salesmen, small tradespeople, and switchboard operators, he thinks them "good people," neglected people, without airs, and in need of a spokesman like him.

Good people? They are, after all, the same people that Franklin Roosevelt once gave hope to—those deserving "little people" whom liberals overromanticized and have since fastidiously disowned. Someday a new political leader, not despising them but understanding them, will find a positive key to their affections again. Now they have only the negativism of George Wallace.

What a dismal prospect faces us in 1976: George Wallace the spoiler, sitting there spittin' back, and infesting the body politic with those second-rate hacks he attracts as convention delegates. And finally going nowhere. But it will be a prospect more dismal should other candidates, those who pretend to responsibility and honor, try to outbid Wallace, using his means and methods. The worst danger of Wallace is not himself, but the shabby and cynical strategies he leads other candidates into. Better simply to let his forces crest and then spend themselves on the shore. And, mind you, should either major political party in 1976 seek to buy Wallace off, placing him on the ticket where he would be one heartbeat away from the presidency, I predict that party will go down to certain and deserved defeat.

FRONT PAGE NEWS!

The Charleston Mercury Extra.

Saturday Evening, April 18, 1961

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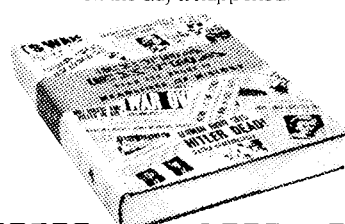
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SLEUTHING

SIR: Although Clifford D. May provided a generally accurate look at private detectives in your August issue ("Whatever Happened to Sam Spade?"), his literary remarks were less reliable.

Mr. May implied that Dashiell Hammett did not complete another novel because of the McCarthy troubles of the 1950s. What Mr. May fails to mention is that Hammett did not complete and publish any more novels after *The Thin Man* in 1934.

R. D. HELDENFELS
Newport News, Va.

SIR: Mr. May is laboring under a misapprehension. In *Hamlet* it is the elder Hamlet's ghost who reveals the identity of Claudius, the murderer, and his modus operandi. There is no "secret informer," and I doubt that even with a goodly stretch of the imagination the ghost could be classed as one.

Furthermore, *Hamlet* does little that might be called "sleuthing." Therefore, it cannot be a detective story or play. I can't see why Mr. May decided to drag all this bunk into a perfectly good article. Shakespeare is timeless, but please, don't make more of him than what he was.

PETER OBST
Philadelphia, Pa.

SIR: Clifford D. May writes of the creation of Sherlock Holmes by Conan Doyle: "The detective's surname is believed by some to have been a tribute to American Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes." Mr. May then goes on to misquote my good friend, Dr. Julian Wolff, on the same subject.

In 1887, Oliver Wendell Holmes II

was a distinguished legal scholar on the bench of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. Conan Doyle probably knew and respected the son, but Sherlock Holmes was named in tribute to the father.

WILLIAM D. JENKINS
New York, N. Y.

Clifford May replies:

It is true that Hammett did not publish after 1934, but he did continue to write. He also painted, studied a wide range of subjects, and edited a fine Army newspaper while serving in the Aleutians during World War II (he volunteered at the age of forty-eight).

After the war the possibility remained that he would finally begin the "new literary life" (Lillian Hellman's words) that he meant to start for so long. Prison destroyed that possibility. "Hammett was ruined by McCarthyism," says Lillian Hellman.

Mr. Obst, "you would pluck out the heart of my mystery" (*Hamlet*, III, ii, 389) and do "find quarrel in a straw" (IV, iv, 53).

Certainly the ghost is a "secret informer." And while my tone was essentially tongue-in-cheek, you must admit that *Hamlet* does "catch the conscience of the King" (II, ii, 641), and that his overall method of operation—"By indirections find directions out" (II, i, 63)—is not unlike that of other fictional sleuths.

Mr. Jenkins makes a strong case in favor of the father, but I did not misquote Dr. Wolff or anyone else. Dr. Wolff and I even discussed whether "Holmesian" concepts of justice were identical in the writings of both Conan Doyle and the esteemed Supreme Court justice. I might also direct Mr. Jenkins' attention to the following passage by Professor Harry Shefter (from *The*

Great Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, New York, 1972, "Biographical Background," p. 4): "The name Sherlock Holmes derives from . . . Justice of the Supreme Court Oliver Wendell Holmes."

HITS, RUNS, ERRORS

SIR: David Markson ("A Day for Addie Joss," August *Atlantic*) erred in his statement that Home Run Baker's four consecutive home run crowns were surpassed only by Babe Ruth's six. He forgot Ralph Kiner's seven straight in his first seven years in the majors.

JEFFREY RICHMAN
Lynbrook, N. Y.

SIR: I object to David Markson's glib assumption, implicit throughout the article, that ballplayers of the Ty Cobb era were better than today's players just because their records were better.

Such objective criteria as we do have—for example, the continual breaking of track and field records—suggest that modern-day athletes are much bigger, stronger, and faster than those of a few generations ago. And a hundred innovations since then have combined to change the meaning of those old statistics. If Cobb had had to play five night games a week, fly coast to coast, face an assortment of trick-ball-throwing relief pitchers and fielders with oversized gloves, would he have hit anything like .367 lifetime? Who can say?

DAVID CORCORAN
Tomkins Cove, N. Y.

David Markson replies:

I didn't err in stating that Home Run Baker's four consecutive home run titles were surpassed only by Babe Ruth's six. I said "Only Babe Ruth in the same

league, with six in a row, dominated for a longer stretch." I'm fully aware of Kinner's seven straight titles; but he was in the *other* league, of course.

Deep down, I know Mr. Corcoran is right; put them into a magic time machine, and today's stars would prove far superior. Still, my whole theme was nostalgia, as much a part of baseball's lore as any statistics. Life's grim; let's cherish our old dreams.

SWEET AND SOUR

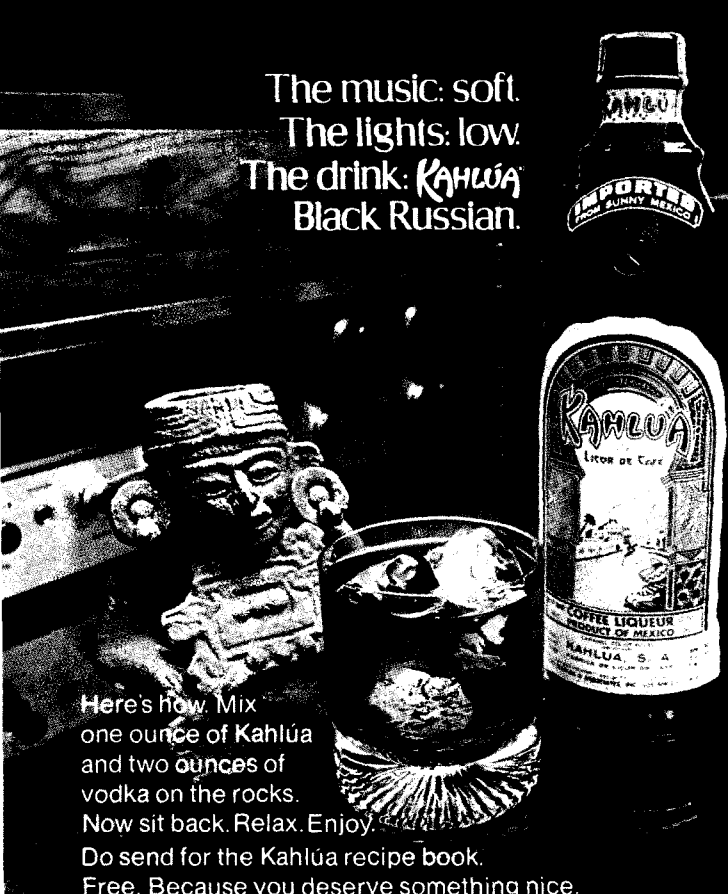
SIR: "Sweet and Sour" by John Pekkanen and Mathea Falco (July *Atlantic*) is an example of highly slanted reporting by authors with seemingly unqualified backgrounds apparently writing on behalf of some group with strong prejudices against sugar usage.

According to the writers, "One disease for which sugar is unquestionably responsible is tooth decay." This flat, unqualified statement disregards what dental researchers recognize, namely, that for caries to develop there must be proper surroundings (i.e., mouth and tooth conformation), microorganisms capable of producing acids which cause caries, and a medium on which such microorganisms feed. Sugar has been recognized as *part* of the latter medium (trace materials are necessary for microbial growth as well as human growth). Other carbohydrates also serve as a growth medium for the microorganisms.

No meaningful scientific data establishes any relationship of sugar to coronary heart disease (CHD), despite the claims of Dr. Yudkin. Yudkin's position has been invalidated not only by Dr. Keys but also by Dr. A. R. P. Walker, who states, in part: "... bearing in mind the multifactorial etiology of CHD, it is questionable whether, within a given context, major incrimination of sugar is possible."

A report on diet and coronary heart disease was made in 1974 by the Advisory Panel of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (Nutrition) on Diet in relation to Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Disease (England). Dr. Yudkin was a member of this committee and voiced a minority opinion to the effect that the panel emphasized the role of fats and de-emphasized the role of sucrose in CHD. The majority of this authoritative panel deemed otherwise.

Diabetes is not caused by sugar intake. No one knows what causes diabetes. Many diabetics die of heart disease, a major risk factor being obesity; and



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for many if not most persons, obesity can be traced to an energy imbalance. That is, they take in more in calories than they expend in exercise.

Comments in the article regarding the petition of The Center for Science in the Public Interest for a maximum of 10 percent sugar in ready-to-eat cereals sorely underplays FDA Commissioner Schmidt's comments on rejecting the petition. Perhaps the most searching indictment of CSPI's method of operating is the Commissioner's remark to CSPI: "Your petition simply does not address these scientific issues in a straightforward and candid way, discussing both sides of the issues and the current state of the scientific literature." The same comment applies equally to the Pekkanen-Falco article.

Criticizing the USDA Handbook No. 8 on Composition of Foods for lumping all carbohydrates together is just poor reporting. A phone call would have uncovered the facts that the handbook is currently being revised and that it is only very recently that methods of carbohydrate analysis in food products have been reduced to practice. These methods are, we understand, currently being evaluated at the USDA.

G. NORRIS BOLLENBACK, PH.D.
The Sugar Association, Inc.
Washington, D. C.

Mathea Falco and John Pekkanen reply:

One of Mr. Bollenback's chief objections is that we did not mention the variables involved in diabetes, choosing instead to isolate sugar as the sole causal factor. That is flatly false, as a careful reading of our article will show. We noted that a genetic tendency to diabetes must be present and specifically said that "no one argues that high sugar consumption alone causes diabetes."

Mr. Bollenback suggests that we strongly implicated sugar in tooth decay, and he is right. We did so because every researcher we spoke with—including Dr. Abraham Nizel, professor of nutrition and dentistry at Tufts University, and Dr. Jean Mayer of Harvard—implicated sugar unequivocally.

Mr. Bollenback says we were captives of the antisugar people. He ignores the fact that the opinions of Dr. Frederick Stare and Dr. Ancel Keys, both of whom discount sugar as a health hazard, were noted prominently in the article. As for his other objections, the weakness of his arguments speaks for itself. Mr. Bollenback read into the article precisely what he wanted.

WHY JOHNNY CAN'T RUN

SIR: "Why Johnny Can't Run" (August *Atlantic*) struck a responsive chord in me. I was a "classic fat boy" who only recently shed his fatness and got interested in skiing, tennis, and cycling. To this day I detest team sports and macho competition. The system of movement education that the article outlines is a godsend—I only hope that it makes its way north of the border quickly. Our kids could use it too.

DAVID A. BASSKIN
Willowdale, Ont.

SIR: "Why Johnny Can't Run" was long past due.

It's been twelve years since I was in a high school gym class, but I'll never forget those days and minor horror stories.

A polio victim at age five, I was left with only a slight limp. But do you think I got any encouragement from the teachers to develop my weak leg muscles? At sixteen, being last *every time* in the 60-yard dash and mile run was more than I could bear.

One day someone stole my tennis shoes from the locker room. My punishment was five laps around the track . . . barefoot. Made about as much sense to me then as it does now.

GORDON CHESY
New York, N. Y.

SIR: Three cheers and a tiger for George Leonard, for pointing out why Johnny can't run.

From the gym teacher's crew-cut to the devastating effect on one's self-image, everything tallied with what I've tried to forget about high school P. E. Until you've been successively and publicly demoted from participant in the Sports Day calisthenics team to the person in charge of the record player to the person who opens the door for the parents, you don't know what humiliation is.

MAUREEN CARDEN
Montreal, Que.

ADVICE AND CONSENT

SIR: Larry L. King's article, "Williams for the Defense" (July *Atlantic*), was humorous and interesting, though not factually correct. As one of the "dozen technical experts [who attempted] to explain how and when money circulates once printed," I feel my effort was in vain if not even the press could associ-

ate the relevance of my testimony with other evidence presented at the trial.

King appears to be confused by the two batches of notes, each of \$10,000. The first of these contained forty-nine notes bearing the signature of George Shultz, while the second batch contained no notes bearing Shultz's signature, and it was this currency that was found in Jacobsen's lockbox. Therefore, it was not the notes signed by Shultz that caused Jacobsen to cooperate with the Federal authorities, but rather evidence presented by the representatives of the Federal Reserve banks that certain notes removed from the lockbox could not have been there since 1971, as their serial numbers showed they were not issued for circulation until 1973.

Jacobsen's story of holding the notes intact since 1971 probably would have stood up except for the records maintained by the Federal Reserve banks.

I have encountered difficulty in trying to explain the role that the Federal Reserve representatives played in the trial, and King's statement that we were "proving that money is green and has numbers on it" has not simplified my task. The evidence we presented was impartial—neither for nor against Connally. It was submitted to the Watergate Special Prosecution Force in response to subpoenas, and our subsequent presence at the trial was likewise in response to subpoenas. We were pleased, however, that the condition of our records was such that they qualified for presentation in court.

STANLEY B. LACKS
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

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THE MEDITATION GAME

BY ADAM SMITH

Adam Smith, formerly of Wall Street, sets out on the road to psychic health, higher understanding, Nirvana; and along comes a character in a bed sheet off the Air India flight, and he says, "Why don't you say gazoom gazoom gazoom." And it *works!*

On the first day of Christmas, my alleged true love gave to me a silver pillbox. Infuriating. It was true, of course, that gentlemen of finance consumed pain-easing pills, traveled with them, and even offered them to each other, but then, there was a lot of pain around. Fund managers chewed absently on antacids, wondering where the last hundred million went so quickly. When you met them, they might offer you one, as if proffering a cigarette or a Life Saver. A high-risk, high-stress profession, wrote one psychologist in a paper. No wonder drug companies had such nice profit margins, and sold at such high premiums.

Two gallants of my acquaintance wrote one of the best short reports I have ever read. The university portfolio they managed was down by a little over two hundred million dollars. (Do you know

how long it takes to *raise* two hundred million dollars?) They remained fully invested, they said, because things were so bad they thought they could get no worse. "The light we saw at the end of the tunnel," they said, "was a freight train coming the other way."

Some people disappeared from the money business, and some disappeared right off the planet, ahead of schedule. If somebody had a heart attack, we said, oh, sorry, when will he be back in the office? It was certainly a statistical aberration when I lost my panel, the investment strategy panel I moderated at the annual convention. My panelists were in their thirties and forties and not fat and they liked their work, so statistically they should not have exited with one heart attack, one ulcer attack, and one something I forget. We recruited another panel without even a moment of silence for our fallen comrades. Very cool, very macho, the show must go on.

I took a working sabbatical. I was going to do some research on health. I would leave my nine-foot teak desk, my phone with all its buttons lit up, and my totally filled-in Month at a Glance calendar, go find some answers, and be welcomed back to the business community, like the first Arapaho that came back to his horseless tribe with a Pawnee pinto. Look, fellas, now we can go twice as fast. I thought this might take a couple of months but well worth it, very important. (I could return

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THAT WAS HOW IT BEGAN. NONEXISTENT PTERODACTYLS FLAPPING THEIR GREAT WINGS OVER FALLEN SECURITY ANALYSTS.

the silver pillbox with the appropriate insult.) There was something else, misty, unarticulated, in this program. One of my convention panelists had told me what his plans were, just as soon as he had enough time and enough money. He certainly had enough money, but he had had time back when he thought he didn't, and then he didn't.

The first physicians I consulted in this venture had all the same symptoms as my compatriots. We have to take it easier, they said wisely. Then they would answer the phone, rub their eyes, and say, yes, they would cover for their buddy till midnight. And then they would say, what's happening, my Gawd, my stocks are down 40 percent, we may have to sell our ski condominium, unless we raise our fees.

I would not have believed, at the outset, that I would be spending any time with exotics like Tibetan lamas and witch doctors and gentlemen who had beards and wore funny clothes. I did not have a beard and I did not own any funny clothes. I would not have believed that I would ever sit in a room chanting a Sanskrit syllable, or drawing a lotus in the air with a \$1.98 G. Schirmer recorder.

Minds. The trouble is minds, not organic medicine, not some germ that comes flying through the air looking for a home. This is Dr. Hans Selye, sixty-eight years old, the distinguished dean of stress medicine. Stress is "a physiologic response

inappropriate to the situation." Misfired signals between mind and body. The physiologic response is the caveman's response when the shadow of a pterodactyl falls over him. Adrenal secretions increase and muscles tense and the coagulation chemistry gets ready to resist wounds. Fight or flight. But what pterodactyl is this? They tell you: the market is down twenty points, or, the vice president wants to see you, or, this whole operation is going to be shut down and moved to Chicago. Blam, pterodactyl time. Gives you, says Dr. Selye, headaches, insomnia, high blood pressure, sinus, ulcers, rheumatism, cardiovascular and kidney disease. And more. One from Column A, one from Column B. Some people have a pterodactyl every day. Why? An imbalance, says Dr. Selye, an imbalance. In what? In living. Western medicine doesn't extend its authority there, except to say take it easy, take off some weight, watch your diet.

So: lots of explorers have headed west by going east, saying, there must be a better way, and that was how this venture in—what? It's hard to define, some sort of psychology or awareness, maybe. That was how it began. Nonexistent pterodactyls flapping their great wings over fallen security analysts.

Of all the mind trips I've tried, the simplest and most astonishing is meditation; simple because it is simple, astonishing because it has produced a great service industry. And the McDonald's of the meditation business is Transcendental Meditation. The McDonald's or maybe the Howard Johnson's: a relatively low fixed price, a standard item, and increasing numbers of franchises or outlets. Like McDonald's, TM suggests, "You deserve a break today," in fact, you deserve two, twenty minutes in the morning and twenty minutes in the evening. TM has processed about half a million Americans, most of them in the last four or five years, and that gives it respectable size among service organizations.

In one sense, TM is a pioneer. Indians have been bringing the Vedanta, or Hindu scriptures, here for almost a hundred years, but TM made a meditation technique work with an audience that didn't want to hear any Hindi. And for de-Hindizing the technique, TM deserves its success, which has been spectacular.

Transcendental Meditation comes from a gentleman called Maharishi Mahesh Yogi—born Mahesh Prasad Varma in 1918 in the Central Provinces, father forest ranger, degree in physics from Allahabad University in 1942, says the official biography. Maharishi was on his way to becoming, like other members of his caste, a merchant or a clerk, and to having a marriage arranged for him, when he met one of the major religious leaders of India: Swami Brahmanada Saraswati, the Jadgad-

Adam Smith is the author of *The Money Game*. This excerpt is drawn from his forthcoming book, *Powers of Mind*.

The Meditation Game

guru Bhagwan Shankaracharya, and he became a disciple and spent thirteen and a half years with him. His assignment, given when it became time for the master to leave his body, was to find a simple form of meditation for everyone to practice. Maharishi spent two years in a cave in the Himalayas and emerged with TM. (Two years in a cave, for a religious Indian, is like two years at the Harvard Business School for a commercial banker.)

Maharishi seems to have started his efforts quite innocently, without any great world plan, talking to Indian businessmen. His instincts steered him in the direction of acceleration; things moved faster in the West, so by 1960 he was setting up the International Meditation Society in London. Being pragmatic in nature, he was not afraid to use radio, television, and public relations—an approach that, needless to say, did not go down well with the gurus left in India. By the late 1960s he had as followers the Beatles and Mia Farrow; John Lennon once spent eight hours a day meditating with the Maharishi in the Himalayas. The bearded, giggly presence of the Maharishi became familiar on the talk shows: there was Maharishi on Johnny Carson.

And that crested and passed. The Maharishi went on a nationwide tour with the Beach Boys, and nobody came. The tour had to be canceled, and it looked like TM was another one of those Sixties things, fading with the natural rhythms of time. Within a couple of years, the Maharishi was to say he had failed in his mission, and yet even as he spoke another wave was beginning to curl.

When I signed up for TM, I had already been through a year of other trips that involved meditations, and my attitude was more that of an engineer taking apart somebody else's widget—well, let's see how *they* do it. Unlike most of my TM classmates, I did not have a friend who had just done it, and also unlike my TM classmates, I had been through much of the literature of meditation.

Our first lecture was in a university building. On the table in our room were glossy reprints of articles from *Scientific American* and the *Wall Street Journal* telling us how TM would fix us up, with color charts in them of stress relief. TM's own literature was there also. Our instructor was a clean-cut junior called Buzz, who wore a sports jacket and loafers, and who smiled a lot. The audience was naturally mostly students, but with a sprinkling of older people, for the TM lectures were advertised—mostly in diners and on tree trunks, it seemed to me—over a wide area.

"Anybody can do this," Buzz said, "no matter how old or how smart. As we meditate we become clearer, you can do more, students get better grades, the mind doesn't wander. TM rest is deeper than sleep. It gets rid of really deep stresses. It helps your relationship with other people. You will get along better with your roommates."

What we would do, if we wanted to sign up, was to come to two lectures, and then be initiated on the weekend, and then one more lecture and one more weekend—that's all there was.

"Previously, we had three states of consciousness," Buzz said. "Waking, sleeping, and dreaming. This is the fourth state, cosmic and all-inclusive. The mind is evolutionary, a blessing of the Creator, approaching the Infinite One"—Buzz giggled a bit, and the audience got restless—"but there's nothing to believe in TM. You don't have to believe in anything. And nothing to give up."

"Is this the same as yoga?" somebody wanted to know.

"No, all you do in TM is sit still," Buzz said. "Yoga will give you a charley horse. Zen monks meditate for twenty-five years to get the same result TM will give you in two weeks. It's different from concentration, and from contemplation."

TM, said Buzz, uses a sound. Different sounds match different people—you and your roommate might not like the same music. A sound in the Vedic tradition is a mantra. Each of us would get his own mantra. Were all the mantras really individual? They were, though there were far more people than mantras, since 20,000 people a month were signing up for TM. How do the instructors match the mantra to the individual? I wanted to know. Buzz said you went to a teacher training course—ten or twelve weeks—and learned how to do this, but it was privileged information how it was done. We would fill out a questionnaire, have an interview, and get our mantras.

"Never," Buzz said, "tell anybody your mantra. That will ruin the whole effect." How come? "We have found that through experience. Your mantra is secret. Every once in a while somebody goes through TM, and then a friend gets interested, and they tell the friend the mantra, just to save the initiation fee. It doesn't work. There was a guy in Rhode Island who used somebody else's mantra and he got edgy and irritable and lost energy. It's worth the fee." The fee was \$45 for students and \$75 for adults. The fee for adults is now up to \$125.

We filled out questionnaires, and we made appointments for Saturday.

"Bring six to twelve fresh flowers, two to three sweet fresh whole fruit, and a clean white handkerchief. And the fee for the course," Buzz said. "Don't eat a lot. And we ask that you not use any recreational chemicals while you are learning TM. Give it a chance to work. We find that many people cut down on their recreational chemicals after learning meditation."

Hands went up in the audience. What kind of fruit? What kind of flowers? They wanted to be told exactly. *All* recreational chemicals?

On Saturday I reported with one apple, one orange, one white handkerchief, and a bouquet from the florist. We were in the basement of a university building. No English 212 today. One at a time, we went into the initiation room (English 212). Candles, incense, fruit, lots of flowers, very pretty.

It was so dark in the room I could barely see the pictures scotch-taped on the wall: Maharishi, I supposed, and Guru Dev, his teacher. The offerings, said Buzz, were symbolic, flower of life, fruit the seed of life, and the handkerchief, the cleansing of the spirit. Buzz went through a ten-minute ceremony, all by himself and all in Sanskrit, with rice, salt, and sandalwood.

"What was that?" I said when he stopped.

"That's the ceremony, initiation," Buzz said. "Some of it is the names of the masters who preserved the technique. We're grateful to the Vedic tradition for having preserved it; it's as applicable today as thousands of years ago. Okay, I'm going to give you your mantra. The mantra is meaningless, a sound whose effect is known. Your mantra is *Shiam*."*

"*Shiam*?" I said. "*Shiam*? You sure *Shiam* is mine?"

Buzz looked stunned. What's the matter with *Shiam*? And I was thinking: You sure it's *Shiam* and not *Shiom*? And I had been looking for some basic Sanskrit sound, Hum or Aum or Hrim or Bam; I didn't exactly remember *Shiam*. And I was also remembering an unpublished article on the "rise times" of sounds in physiological psychology, how mantras were always soft and mellifluous, never any k's, nothing sharp, lots of soft mmm's and o's, see, Campbell's Soup is secretly conditioning you, they have you going mmm-mmm good.

"*Shiam*," Buzz said. "Let's say it." We said it. "Okay, just keep it going, to yourself, and if thoughts come let them come, and don't try." We closed our eyes. I could see the letters: SHIAM. Then I thought, I bet these guys screwed up my mantra, that one doesn't sound quite right, there's no quality these days, car mechanics fake repairs; plumbers, no craftsmen left; but at the same time I knew just as many mantras as Buzz, so I thought, well, what the hell, they all work, and I kept it going. It was very quiet. Toward the end of the twenty-minute period I peeked a couple of times. Buzz had his eyes shut and was breathing evenly. I tried at a couple of different speeds. *Shiam*, slow, and *Shiam Shiam Shiam*, fast. It doesn't have to stay consistent. "Very slowly, open your eyes," Buzz said. "Take a couple of minutes to come out." Was it easy? Yes. Was it pleasant? Yes. Did the mantra change, get faster or slower or disappear? Yes. Did thoughts come? Yes. Good.

Buzz said I could have my handkerchief and

flowers and fruit back. I took the handkerchief, I ate the apple, and I left the orange and the flowers.

In our midweek sessions, we discussed our experiences and asked questions. Did anybody forget their mantra? Some people had. Okay, don't worry about it, if it doesn't come back in a couple of days, call your instructor. Did the mantra show up sometimes when it wasn't TM time? Tell it cheerfully to go away, like a friend who has dropped in when you're working. Did people fall asleep while meditating? That's okay, that's a good meditation, wake up and finish. Did a lot of thoughts come? That's okay, just notice the thoughts and go back to the mantra. Why weren't we getting progressively better? Because there's always the release of stress, until the very last stress is relieved, and that's pure consciousness. When you're in pure consciousness, do you know it? No, you know it later. Does the appearance of the thought correspond in intensity to the stress released? No. A lot of people hadn't noticed any change in themselves. You won't notice the change, it's like staring at a rosebud all night; by morning it's bloomed, but it's hard to notice the changes.

I asked Buzz, after class, "Is this a good job? Part-time?"

"For me, you mean?" Buzz said. "Well, you make a little, but you could certainly make more doing something else in the same time."

There seemed to be a fair dropout rate between the first and second weekends. We went to get our meditations checked. Close your eyes, open your eyes, close them again. Do your meditation. Take a couple of minutes to come out when you're through. Was it easy? Was it pleasant? Good.

The girl who was doing my checking sounded like a recording. Did thoughts come? Yes. Good, the mantra should come as easily and effortlessly as the thoughts. We do not concentrate, we do not try. Any questions? Yes, do a lot of people think this is a waste of time? Yes, but the effects are going on whether you think they are or not, just keep going. Did a lot of people think they were doing it wrong? Yes, just keep going, there is no wrong way if you know there is no wrong way, we do not concentrate, we do not try. Well, I get the meditation part, but where is the transcendental? We are transcending thought when the mantra becomes so refined that it disappears, then the mind transcends everyday awareness and experiences pure awareness, or cosmic consciousness.

"That name puts people off," said one of the TM hierarchy. "We shouldn't say transcendental, we should say approaching transcendental; I wish Maharishi had called it creative intelligence." (The Science of Creative Intelligence is the name of a course within TM.)

But is it really different from sitting with your eyes shut, or taking a nap?

*Use of this mantra by unauthorized personnel is strictly forbidden.—A.S.

The Meditation Game

The Maharishi may have thought he had failed at one point, but events were running independent of him. Actually, while TM faded from the newspapers, and the Maharishi faded from the talk shows, the word-of-mouth on TM continued, so that the numbers of people who signed up for the course didn't diminish. But the candidates were to change character; TM was to shift slowly from the exotic, Beatles-gone-to-Himalayas Sixties thing to the more traditional Ben Franklin, early-to-bed, Dale Carnegie self-help American procedure. At the pivot point of this turn was a slight, blond student in Los Angeles, Robert Keith Wallace. Wallace had begun TM as an undergraduate at UCLA, and he was a friend of Jerry Jarvis, who had been one of the protagonists in starting the Students' International Meditation Society. Wallace proposed a Ph.D. thesis in physiology at UCLA.

"Maharishi had been free to go out with a simple technique, because he wasn't part of a religious hierarchy, and I was free to try something in physiology that nobody with an established reputation would want to risk," Wallace said. Maharishi liked the idea. Nobody had done anything objective, the West was objective, Maharishi said. In India, people went uncritically from master to master, without distinguishing techniques.

For his thesis experiment, Wallace wired up twenty-seven meditators. Each subject would sit connected to instruments that would record continuously. Each subject had a catheter in one artery in the arm; the arm would be poked through a hole in a curtain so the subjects wouldn't see the instruments and the blood should they peek during meditation, because most people do not find the sight of their blood gurgling into instruments conducive to serenity. The wires were on for blood pressure, heart rate, rectal temperature, skin resistance, and EEG. The subjects sat quietly for thirty minutes, then did twenty to thirty minutes of meditation, and then sat quietly again for another thirty minutes.

That must have been some group of meditators. I gave them points just for sitting still with all those wires and with a catheter in the arm.

In the middle period, the meditation period, the oxygen consumption on inhaling and the carbon dioxide on exhaling went way down. A 20 percent drop like that really should indicate a lower metabolism. The EEG showed nice alpha patterns. The heart rates slowed by an average of three beats per minute. Resistance of the skin to an electrical current went up fourfold—the higher the skin resistance, the greater the degree of relaxation.

And how did this differ from a good nap? Well, it does. Oxygen consumption starts to drop right away with meditation, and it takes a couple of hours to start tapering off during sleep. Skin resis-

tance increases during sleep, but not as much as during meditation. (The carbon dioxide in the blood increases during sleep. There are, of course, different stages of sleep and different patterns within those stages.)

In short, the relaxation Wallace reported was, indeed, deeper than sleep, or than some stages of sleep. In fact, he said, the state produced by Transcendental Meditation was different from waking, dreaming, and sleeping. It was a fourth state of consciousness.

Wallace's thesis, "The Physiological Effects of Transcendental Meditation," went off to the prestigious journal *Science*. The report, co-authored with Herbert Benson, a cardiologist and assistant professor of medicine at the Harvard Medical School, appeared not only in *Science*, but in the *American Journal of Physiology*, *Scientific American*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*, all very heavy.

Benson had been in the Public Health Service in Puerto Rico, working on blood pressure. Why did the Puerto Ricans have fewer cardiac ailments than the mainlanders?

"I give up. Why?" I said.

"Because of their attitude," Benson said. "*Mahana*. We need some of that if everybody doesn't want to keep dying so young, a different attitude."

Benson was working on primates at the Harvard Medical School, training them to control their blood pressure, when the meditators presented themselves. Wallace and Benson combined on a couple of experiments, and now the results went out with the prestige of a Harvard Medical School by-line. "Mental states can markedly alter physiologic function," wrote Benson and Wallace. They called the meditation state "a wakeful, hypometabolic physiologic state," a phrase that went ringing through the journals. "Wakeful" because the subjects were awake and you would think they would have to be asleep to get those numbers; "hypometabolic," well, remember, *hypo* is "under," Greek, and *hyper* is "over," excess. A hypermetabolic state—excess, over—accompanies "anticipated stressful situations"; a hypometabolic state "may accompany meditational states." What an anomaly, a waking state with such low metabolism!

Benson was enthused. One third of all the adults in this country suffer from definite or borderline hypertension, high blood pressure. By meditating, he said, "we may be able to prevent and even treat it." And, at the same time, Benson said of TM: "It appears that . . . TM is the fastest and easiest way of doing so at this time."

The partnership of Benson and Wallace was not to last. Wallace was quiet, sincere, soft-spoken, but you sensed somehow the steel spring of the divinity student, the true believer. Wallace was, first and foremost, a meditator, a disciple of the Maharishi; Benson was a physician, a cautious medical

researcher who had never meditated and didn't intend to. Benson winced when his enthusiasm turned up in sleek reprints at all the TM lectures, Herbert Benson, M.D., Harvard Medical School.

By the time I got to Benson and Wallace, they were polite but not really speaking to each other. Wallace became the charter president of Maharishi International University near Santa Barbara (now in Fairfield, Iowa); when you call, the switchboard operator says, "M-I-U." Every course includes "the Science of Creative Intelligence" in its title, from astronomy on. Benson was back in the lab, so cautious it took him six months to send me his first paper, so cautious he wouldn't even let his students know what he was about to publish in some journal, lest somebody leak it to TM and have it turn up in the press or in a glossy reprint at the TM introductory lecture. For ten months, tracking research, I would be calling them alternately, trying to pin down points: "But Benson says . . ." "But Wallace says . . ." Benson said he had a new blood pressure study, it was going to come out in *The Lancet*, the distinguished British medical journal, and it didn't use TM. Could I see it? No, not now. "Herb," I said, "it takes three years to do a book like mine; *The Lancet* will have hit the stands and have been gobbled up long before." Nope. Three weeks after *The Lancet* hit the stands I had my copy from Herb, for which I thanked him, except that my interest had been so whetted that by that time I already had my copy from *The Lancet*.

The research rolled on. My favorite head-bump phrenology journal, *The Journal of Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology*, reported that not only did meditators have those dollops of alpha, and different thetas than sleep has, but the brain-wave rhythms were synchronized, and beta spikes were appearing from deep meditation. "That's when you're touching consciousness, the beta spike," said the TM physiology people. A California researcher reported that TM reduced the symptoms of asthma. Poor damn asthmatics, first they got cured by placebo pills and then by TM; absolutely nobody will believe the trouble is in their chests.

By now, researching TM was replacing the sit-in in the dean's office of a few years back. In my own TM class, two students handed out questionnaires. (What they were researching had already been done—they didn't seem to know it, but what the hell.) And the TM people were hitting research like a fixed slot machine, and printing it with pretty charts on sleek paper. FASTER REACTION TIME, said the poster, showing a quarterback with his arm cocked, linemen descending upon him.

The State Legislature of Illinois endorsed TM. So did General Davis of the Army War College. Joe Namath was into it, and Bill Walton, the bas-

ketball pro, and "there are a couple of strong contenders for the presidency—very strong—who practice TM," said the Research Coordinator.

I don't know when Joe Namath and Bill Walton do their meditating, but I found it hard to do anything competitive afterward, for an hour or two. You just watch whatever ball it is go by and say, oh, nice shot. It's okay with you, like you've had two beers.

Charlie Tart, of *Altered States*, wrote a journal article in response to TM. He said what he seemed to do was to churn through the undigested stuff of the day, images, thoughts, much as the dream mechanism is said to do. The dream mechanism, it



is said, runs all that stuff through the brain that has been run through during the day, trying to get it organized on all levels, emotional as well as rational. The longer Tart did it, he wrote, the more all that churning calmed down, leaving him finally calmer, short of bliss, and with an aversion to alcohol. He went on to more complex disciplines, where alcohol is considered pretty gross anyway.

TM put out a booklet for businessmen, *Creative Intelligence in Business*, which said that research showed that TM improved behavioral stability, lessened susceptibility to psychosomatic disease, reduced nervousness, aggression, depression, and irritability, increased the clarity of perception, improved learning ability, speeded comprehension, produced better memory and faster absorption of difficult material—and that's only part of it.

Plainly, TM was the greatest thing since peach ice cream.

And all this from sitting still twice a day, closing

the eyes, and going "Hrim, Hrim," or "Shiam, Shiam"?"

Well, yes. "Sometimes," said Wallace, "people make things more difficult than they are."

There are critics. Some academic psychologists called their local TM chapter for guinea pigs, tested them, and found that skin temperature didn't go up as advertised. Some critics said that the TM research was all a series of one-shots, no long-range follow-ups. Some critics said that TM sets up experiments, pops the results, and has them out in a sleek glossy booklet before they are professionally published and critiqued. FASTER REACTION TIME, they said, for example, was based on

gressive relaxation, and some religious techniques. . .

Religious techniques?

Well, some forms of Christianity, some forms of Judaism, some forms of Islām, just possibly Subud (that's Indonesian), Hichiren Sho Shu, Hare Krishna, Meher Baba—

Everything works?

No, not at all, it's just that certain techniques can produce an altered state of consciousness, and some altered states of consciousness produce a response of relaxation. In fact, that's what we're calling it, "the Relaxation Response."

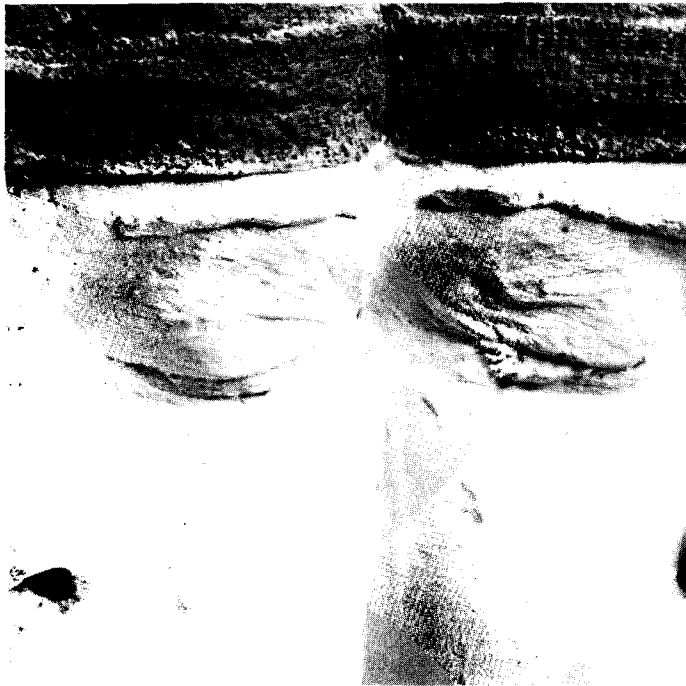
The *Lancet* article said Benson and his team had reduced the blood pressure in the experimental

TM TEACHES A TECHNIQUE OF RELAXATION, AND RELAXATION HAS SOME BENEFICIAL EFFECTS.

subjects without TM and without anything fancy and, in fact, by a very ordinary English mantra. But he didn't call it a mantra. The magic English mantra in a moment. First, let's see how, in this case, our Western scientific paradigm took us away from something that worked and substituted something much more complex.

To solve the mysteries of the brain, Western man has been pulling and pushing and analyzing and dissecting. Descartes had brain drawings, the eye sees here and the perception comes here. Camillo Golgi, in the 1890s, devised a stain, and now you can see a neuron, a nerve cell. Golgi said these neurons were continuous through the brain, and the great Spanish microscopist, Santiago Ramón y Cajal, disagreed and said each cell was separate, and when they gave them a Nobel Prize jointly in 1906 the fellas wouldn't speak to each other in Stockholm, threw pillows and sulked. Golgi stains are very pretty. A lady in physiology in Berkeley was making shirts with Golgi stains, very pretty, must be real conversation stoppers, what is that interesting pattern on your shirt, oh, those are neurons from the cerebral cortex. Oh. Must be one of the world's great in-groups when you're wearing a Golgi-stain shirt and you see another one in the airport.

So here is the neuron looking like, printed in



an unpublished experiment with only eight undergraduates, and uncritiqued statistics.

But for some of the people, some of the time, TM works.

There, I said it. That is, it teaches a technique of meditation that produces relaxation, and relaxation has some beneficial effects. It may produce even more than relaxation. *Meditation works*. Funny phrase, yet there it is. But before you put me in the newest TM booklet as an endorser saying "TM works"—which it does—you have to finish the story.

Benson, half of the great research team, was back in the lab at the Harvard Medical School, without Wallace. Now he emerged from the laboratory firing salvos into the medical journals. (The *Lancet* article was one.) Benson had analyzed, dissected, and reassembled the whole mantra business, and TM had no monopoly.

No? What else works?

Some secular techniques, autogenic training, pro-

black and white, a star or a rhombus, some say, but to me like a fried egg, a little too much pepper in one part of the yolk, and the white splatted out into fingers, as if the pan were really hot and the egg was dropped from a couple of feet. Between the end of one finger and the beginning of the next, on the next fried egg, is a gap, called a synapse by the British neurophysiologist Sir Charles Sherrington, 1897. Sherrington is a semi-poet of neurophysiology, as well as a great teacher who keeps asking his students at Cambridge to bring him something new to learn, and to whom the brain is an "enchanted loom." Nice. The synapses, the gaps, are devices for processing information, lots of neurons in the cortex, 10^{10} , and even more synaptic contacts, 10^{14} .

So an Impulse comes chugging down the axon, the long finger coming away from the cell body. Tra la la la la la, and now it gets to the edge, and how is it going to get across the gap, the synaptic cleft, to the other side? A cliff-hanger. Just as the Impulse is about to give up, a Chemical Transmitter appears, naturally secreted by a vesicle, and gives the Impulse a ride. (That's if it's an Excitatory Transmitter; an Inhibitory Transmitter backs up and lets the Impulse just sit there.)

Otto Loewi in Germany and Sir Henry Dale in England in the 1920s tell about the chemical transmitters, and so does Sherrington's pupil Adrian in Cambridge, and neuron/neuron is too hard to do at first so they study a neuromuscular junction where the Impulse is going to tell the muscle to do something, and later Bernhard Katz in London is going to say the transmitters get released in little packets, or quanta, and the technical equipment gets more sophisticated, electron microscopes, and the synapse gets measured and the impulse clocked, and John Eccles becomes Sir John and E. D. Adrian becomes Lord Adrian, and the work goes on and Nobel Prizes come fluttering out of Stockholm.

And in the biochemistry lab they have found some of the transmitters, norepinephrine and serotonin and dopamine. Reserpine cuts down the norepinephrine, and the chlorpromazines that the Swiss made so much money on block its release. No Chemical Transmitter, no ride for the Impulse. No ride for the Impulse, fewer messages, c-a-l-m, that's the idea. But that's a little heavy-handed, so the fellas keep working on MAO inhibitors, which is not political because MAO is not Tse-tung but monoamine oxidase, monoamine being the transmitter and oxidase being the enzyme that breaks it down, and the MAO inhibitors are more specific, mood elevators as they say, because you can pick what you're transmitting and what not, and you get into alpha blockers and beta blockers, very clever indeed, if still controversial.

But somebody in the lab spots a flaw in the MAOs. Oops. You know doctors are going to pre-

scribe this and warn the people not to eat cheese, and you know some of those jerks are going to eat cheese, and then what do we do? Because there's an amino in the cheese, tyramine, and the MAO inhibitor is going to block the enzyme degradation—never mind what all this means, keep going—and the tyramine won't get deaminized and everybody's blood pressure is going to go up. Back to the test tubes, Harry. Let's see what we can do with that molecule, what did we have last time, carbon hydrogen carbon carbon nitrogen nitrogen, let's give it a pop of fluoride and see if we can change the benzene ring, nitrogen nitrogen *nitrogen*, because sure as hell those tensed-up anxious jerks are going to forget, they're going to feel very virtuous about turning down the Camembert and then they're going to have a cheeseburger with their kids, let's see, increase the budget, turn up the Bunsen burner—we're really huffing and puffing in the paradigm now—

—and along comes a character in a bed sheet stepping off the Air India flight and he says, "Why don't you say gazoom gazoom gazoom, twenty minutes twice a day but not before bedtime, shut your eyes, don't try, gazoom gazoom gazoom"—

—and *it works!*

Why? Why does it work?

Start with noise. In our culture, the noise level is incredible. I don't mean just the jackhammer in the street outside your hotel room, or banging the garbage cans early in the morning. Look at it from the point of view of one of your neurons. There's something to do all the time.

A lot of people get up to an alarm radio, or even TV. Then maybe they read the paper with a cup of coffee. Then they get into their cars and turn on the radio, and they're so habituated to the noise they don't even listen. News: there is a tornado somewhere and traffic deaths somewhere and a house burned down somewhere. All that noise goes pouring through the neurons like syrup through pancakes. And it starts very early. The average kid, say the child experts testifying about TV advertising, watches twenty-five thousand commercials a year, *twenty-five thousand* reinforcements for sugar-coated Popsy Flakes, Captain Goo, it's a tribute to the plasticity of the human brain that the kid can still talk and read—maybe he can't, but you can see why he will have his transistor radio clamped to his ear in Yellowstone Park. The pines and the sky are only partly real: real reality is a Popsy Flake commercial. Our experience shapes our perception.

So we have a lot of practice, a lot of conditioning, in what Huxley called "inquietude for the sake of inquietude." St. John of the Cross wrote about that, you get junked up just on the inquietude.

Much of our noise is distorted, and designed to keep us off balance, the noise about office politics and school politics, the noise, well, the television commercials are a cliché but there they are, five hours per family per night saying you are not okay, your floors do not shine, your coffee tastes lousy, you are exuding odors from fourteen parts of your body and further: health is something you as a consumer have to buy, from the dispensers of health, otherwise you're going to be up all night and your stomach's going to churn, never mind the natural self-corrections in the body, you'd better get in there and do the job. You do not have health, you have to buy it. That one alone costs hundreds of millions, not only over the counter, but as a matter of public policy.

And so—almost instinctively—we don't believe it, or don't believe much of it, and the tension of sorting out, amidst all the noise, what is true and what is not true takes extra energy—we are not even aware of the tension.

And that's just the exterior noise; the confusing messages in the exterior noise are quite enough to produce a need for a quiet interior place. But we also have the *interior* noise, being language-using, conscious, conceptualizing animals, and the interior noise is even louder.

Ratcheta ratcheta ratcheta, Molly Bloom's soliloquy, me my mine, that guy in the office is and I shouldn't have said that yesterday and the prices keep going up and when the phone rang I thought and so on. Even if you turn off the TV, thereby missing the possibility of a baseball game, a football game, a hockey game, a tennis playoff—no matter *what* time of year, lots of noise there—the interior noise will get you, you've had so much practice at it. Say Mommy, baby. Say Mommy. Say Gramma. See Gramma? Smile. Say Gramma to Gramma. The neurons have been twitching so long they think not twitching is abnormal. Once in mid-Arizona a friend of mine got up in the morning bleary-eyed and said he had had no sleep. Why no sleep?

There was a beagle outside my window.

I thought it was a great phrase, something worthy of Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* maybe, God is a shout in the street. There is a beagle outside my window. What kind of beagle? Friendly, tri-colored, tail-wagging, did it sit on the roof of its doghouse flying a Sopwith Camel and dodging the Red Baron?

This damn beagle, said the friend, must have been after a jackrabbit, yawp yawp yawp yawp. All night, yawp yawp yawp yawp. Ah. Well, we all have beagles outside our windows, yawp yawp yawp, and the sound echoes in the neuronal pathways even when we're asleep, even when there is no beagle there and even when we are asleep *we will talk to ourselves constantly*. Not only does that talk limit the perceptions of reality, it gives the

neurons busywork. So: the mantra gives you a bone for the beagle, you can throw it right out there, and once you've thrown it there's nothing much else to do. You may hear some growling and clicking, but if it works you won't hear yawp yawp yawp. Of course, the beagle may not pick up the bone.

But maybe it will.

Rest deeper than sleep? Some of the neurons are quieter when you're asleep, and others work even harder, trying to get things organized for tomorrow, all lined up and consistent. If you can wind up this phrase and send it through on its own momentum, balam balam balam, waking does not matter, it becomes a lullaby for twitchy neurons, they turn up their little toes and snooze.

Why does it work? "A good vibe," said a countercultural voice. "A mantra is a sound whose effect is known," said the telephone company.

Wallace had a guess. Wallace and I spoke in Physiology, in which he was fluent and in which I knew just enough to say, I wish please to cash a traveler's check, where is the bathroom, I wish to speak to the manager.

"Some structure in the brain creates order," said Wallace. "We know the reticular system gates out inputs."

"So far, so good."

"As you decrease the activity in the sympathetic nervous system, the system gets more orderly."

"Is that true?"

"Sure, not only do you have synchronization between the brain hemispheres, which you don't normally see, but you get *harmonics* of alpha as well as alpha, ten twenty forty eighty."

I said I must have missed an issue of my favorite head-bump magazine.

"The inward focus and the passive direction allow the thalamus to fire at its natural rhythm."

Firing in natural rhythm! Lovely.

"And that affects the hypothalamus."

Thalamus, the seat of all that sensorimotor activity in the midbrain, the word comes from *thalamos*, nuptial couch in Greek. Imagine that. And hypothalamus then is under the nuptial couch, and the instructions to fight or flee thus come from under the nuptial couch. Very insightful, Dr. Freud.

"I think in meditation," said Wallace, "there will be an analogy like superconductivity in physics, a place where there is no resistance at all." The rishis who invented the mantras did not have in mind that you could go to the office and see the boss differently, or move the new warehouse to South Carolina without raising your blood pressure, or watch the portfolio go down another 15 percent with equanimity. They had in mind merging consciousness with Consciousness, they said. "Well, they study infinity in physics," Wallace said. "The purpose of the machinery is higher consciousness."

The beagles of the mind are well known to all philosophies, though they are called by many names. TM gives you an immediate device for beagle-soothing, but other schools want you to be aware first of how your mind works. It is always a different matter to recognize something conceptually and to *experience* it.

The year before I got to TM, I was in a course called Arica, which was a full-time esoteric school. One of the exercises—you could call it a meditation—went like this. You get a rock. (Some people got very pretty rocks, since they were going to be doing this exercise six days a week, four hours a day.) Class exercise. You put your rock on the floor in front of you; you can sit on a pillow. You put your consciousness in the rock. I was confused. How do you do that? Now you take a breath, pick up the rock, hold your breath, and move the rock in a circle in front of you. Your eyes are shut. And while you move the rock, you think, *Om namo naraya naya*, which you can spot immediately as a Sanskrit mantra. Then you exhale and put the rock down, take another breath, and do the same thing left-handed, two repetitions of the mantra per circle of the rock per breath. That's the beginning; it goes on. The last motion—same mantra going—is to circle your head with the rock, and visualize a white light making the same circle inside your head.

Then you start over. Four hours. Nobody ever said that was a relaxation exercise, though you would think with all those circles and mantras and breathing the beagles would all be occupied. And you weren't supposed to think anything else; just *Om namo naraya naya*.

My first reactions were: my knee hurts, this is silly, this is very boring, *Om namo naraya naya*, I lost the count there, what time is it, now my other knee hurts, *Om namo naraya naya*, this is the dumbest thing I've ever seen, *Om namo naraya naya*, my nose itches, *Om namo naraya naya*, what shall we have for dinner, look, that guy is already circling his head with his rock, *Om namo naraya naya*, I think I'll quit this whole business, this is the most *boring* invention since *piano* lessons, these are the piano scales of the mind, dum da da da da da dum.

I went to lunch with two classmates on the third day, a physician and a psychologist. Physician, B.S., M.D., and psychologist, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. And you know what we talked about? How big do you make *your* circle? Is it better to have a big rock or a little rock? Is it better to have a pretty rock or a plain rock? Isn't this the most boring thing, I wonder what it leads to? Can you make a white light go on at the same time the rock is going around your head? Can I see your rock when we get back to class?

Along about the second week, I got very Prussian and conscientious. I was only going to think *Om namo naraya naya*, and nothing else! Just like the good Germans in Autogenic Training. Enough of the chitter-chatter! No more what time is it, my knee hurts, it's so pretty outside why am I in here. No more!

And I couldn't do it. It was like reading the sentence Don't think of an elephant: by the time you've read "elephant" it's too late. Something always popped up; it wasn't a verbal thought, it was an image, and not a white light image, either.

So I decided to do the opposite: I would *not* say *Om namo naraya naya*, I was just going to go over a list of stocks and review what each company had earned the previous year and what it was expected to earn this year. That was more successful, except for the occasional *Om namo naraya naya* that crept in uninvited.

I went home that night and I looked up all the stocks and their estimated earnings and their prices, and I was rarely more than a nickel off. Reaction: first, a little flutter of pride; second, an absolute wave of horror. All those numbers are already in the books, and that's what I'm carrying around in my head! It was like opening the attic door and this foul air comes out and there's all this *junk* lying around, bits of pictures, pieces of papers with old phone numbers, legs of old toys, bicycle tires for vanished bicycles, wishes, inhibitions, dreams, old conversations, conversations the way they should have come out, *junk*! Who is that who has all that junk in his head?

By chance, a friend came by and we went off to meet an ex-psychologist called Richard Alpert in his old incarnation—the ex-sidekick of Leary—and Baba Ram Dass in his present, and he said what is it you're doing, and I said, well, we have an hour of sort of hatha yoga and an hour of Tibetan chanting and then we turn this rock in a circle for four hours—"Ah," he said—and I said, I am very depressed because my mind is a pile of junk.

"That's nice, that's nice," said Baba Ram Dass. "You're doing well. The Indians say the mind is a drunken monkey, you know. When I went to India, I went to this monastery, and they showed me into this little cell, and they said, count your breath, and we'll bring the food right here. And I said, well, I don't think I want to do that right now, and they said, okay, that's what we do here, so if you're not ready, let us know whenever you're ready. So I said okay, breathe in, breathe out, one, breathe in, breathe out, two. And I thought of all the ice-cream sundaes I had ever eaten, and old movies I had seen, and old conversations, and future conversations, and in the afternoons I would think, there's an afternoon flight from Delhi to New York at three-thirty, I could walk out of here, I could be in Delhi tonight, I could be on that flight tomorrow."

"But you didn't."

"No, I didn't."

"So your mind is a drunken monkey, too."

"Everybody's mind is a drunken monkey, but they aren't aware of it. Now you're aware of it."

"I may have been just as happy not being aware of it."

But too late; don't think of an elephant. I went back to Om namo naraya naya, only now there was a little distance between me and the drunken monkey, enough so I could say, what is the drunken monkey going to come up with now? Let's get back to work? What's for dinner? This whole exercise is dumb? What?

If you could see into the minds of the president of U.S. Steel and the president of the AFL-CIO, if those gentlemen were sitting turning a rock and going Om namo naraya naya, their minds would be next year's budget and last year's budget and old golf scores and children's marks, images of faces, images of secretaries, obsolete airline schedules, disjointed columns of numbers already in the books—the whole array. Czech poetry. Scandinavian drinking songs.

The lesson that seeps through can be a little chilling: *your head is not your friend*. Not automatically. "The mind," said St. Teresa, the fifteenth-century Spanish mystic, "is an unbroken horse." That gives us beagles, monkeys, and horses, but you get the idea.

Not all religious disciplines want to teach you to still the mind, especially not in two weekends; some want you first to see its nature, or their version of its nature.

But perhaps religion to altered states to relaxation to lowered blood pressure is a bit cumbersome. TM had taken much of the doctrine out of its technique; now Benson, the Harvard Medical School half of the old research team, was to take out the rest. But first he had to review the physiological benefits religion had had when it and not science was the paradigm:

"In the Western world today," wrote Benson and his associates in *Psychiatry*, "there is a growing interest in nonpharmacological, self-induced, altered states of consciousness because of their alleged benefits of better mental and physical health and improved ability to deal with tension and stress. During the experience of one of these states, individuals claim to have feelings of increased creativity, of infinity, and of immortality; they have an evangelistic sense of mission, and report that mental and physical suffering vanish. Subjective and objective data exist which support the hypothesis that an integrated central nervous system reaction, the '*relaxation response*,' underlies this altered state of consciousness. Physicians should be knowledgeable of the physiologic changes and possible

health benefits of the relaxation response."

A Nobel-winning Swiss physiologist, Walter Hess, had delineated the location of the fight-or-flight, or "ergotropic," response, and its opposite, called the "trophotropic," in the brain of the cat. A relaxation spot in the brain! "... the anterior hypothalamus," wrote Benson, "extending into the supra- and pre-optic areas, septum and inferior lateral thalamus."

As Hess had said, there were no specific foci for

**EVERYBODY'S MIND IS A
DRUNKEN MONKEY,
BUT THEY AREN'T AWARE
OF IT. NOW YOU'RE
AWARE OF IT.**



isolated responses, "but a collective representation of a group of responses."

And how do you get to the anterior hypothalamus to get the message to relax?

Benson delineated four elements:

(1) *Mental Device*. "There should be a constant stimulus, e.g. a sound, word, or phrase repeated silently or audibly, or fixed gazing at an object. The purpose of these procedures is to shift from logical, externally-oriented thought."

Benson did not mention "mantra."

(2) *Passive Attitude*. Don't worry about how you're doing, and if thoughts come, go back to the technique.

(3) *Decreased Muscle Tonus*. Sit in a comfortable posture and take it easy.

(4) *Quiet Environment*. Shut your eyes (except for meditations in gazing at an object).

If the effects of the relaxation response held up long-term, Benson and his associates wrote, the effect on the economics of therapy would be profound, "since it is practiced at no other cost than time."

"You're talking about the \$125 mantra at TM," I suggested.

"I think TM is fine if that's what you want," Benson said. "But other things work, too."

"Prayer?"

"Well, not prayer quite in the conventional sense. But if a Catholic comes in, say, and wants to use some childhood prayer, that's fine, although most of those prayers have a lot of syllables. We don't propose it voluntarily, because a lot of prayers aren't neutral; the way they were taught has left some emotional residue, guilt or tension."

"Do you have an alternate mantra, neutral and free of meaning?"

"Yes. You sit quietly, close your eyes, relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and moving up to your face—"

"—like progressive relaxation—"

"—like progressive relaxation, and you become aware of your breathing. You breathe through your nose, and as you breathe out, you think to yourself, One—in, out—One—in, out—One."

"Your mantra is One? How did you pick that?"

"Well, we were looking around the lab, you can't use pen or pencil, some people might have hang-ups about pens or pencils, you can't have people count very high, if they're really relaxed, they'll lose the count, and if they start to worry they lose the passive attitude, and the Zen breathing exercises had people counting to some low number like three."

"So you picked One. No other numbers?"

"Well, the next one up that's euphonious, that doesn't have sharp sounds, doesn't require effort, is Nine."

"What about the religious significance of One?"

"What religious significance?"

"Well, there's the One in Oriental philosophy, as opposed to the Nothing, there's the One in Meister Eckhardt, the mystic, and there's the One in Indian religion of the Being, the All, the Unity, there's the Hebrew, 'The Lord Our God, The Lord Is One—'"

"Oh, Lord, we didn't think of that," Benson said. There was some silence on the phone for a minute. "But I don't think that's going to hang up too many people. If they're hung up on One, we'll find another sound, but One is neutral to most people."

I called up Wallace. Wallace had been away, and hadn't seen the latest *Lancet* or *Psychosomatic Medicine*.

"One?" he said. "One?"

"One," I said. "Maybe, in extreme emergencies, Nine."

"What was the drop in blood pressure?"

"It looks like about eleven millimeters of mercury in the mean systolic, and about five diastolic."

"What was the drop in oxygen consumption?"

"From 258.9 to 225.4, and carbon dioxide down about 12 percent."

Nobody said anything.

"That's nice," Wallace said. "That's very nice."

"I have this slightly used mantra—" I said.

"It may be that a lot of things will work," Wallace said, "though we were the first to test this technique, and we'll have the first long-range studies. Other techniques may produce relaxation, but there is a difference between a mantra and other sounds, a subtle but real difference. And we have classes and free checking, and the support of other meditators, people need that, people like that."

(In fairness, the TM fee is the initiation fee, and subsequent classes and checking are indeed free. In addition, TM runs retreat weekends in the countryside at nominal cost.)

I did a little informal polling. Both Benson and Wallace were right. Benson's mantra—One—was cheaper, but Wallace did indeed have teaching and checking and group support. In the poll, I told people I had a meditation technique. The technique was the same, but one version of it came from the Harvard Medical School and the other version came from India. The Harvard Medical School version was free and the Indian one cost \$75, a white handkerchief, some fruit and flowers, and two weekends. Which one works?

Nobody wanted the Harvard Medical School technique. What does the Harvard Medical School know about meditation? And free? Why free? How can it be any good if it's free? No, let's have the Indian technique. But what impressed the pollees about the Indian technique was not the fruit, the white handkerchief, the incense, and so on, but the reprints from the Harvard Medical School! They

wanted the mantra validated by the doctors!

Some further research showed that Benson was right, TM had no monopoly as a relaxation technique, and Wallace was right, a *system* of meditation had many subtle gradations. It was true that meditation was a relaxation response as Benson said; many people fell asleep during their meditations. But it was more than just relaxation. Benson had stopped too soon, or had been too general. A Harvard psychologist, Daniel Goleman, got the wires out for a group of meditators and a control group, and showed them both an extremely stressful safety movie, in which fingers were lost in machinery, circular saws bit into workers' stomachs, and so on. The meditators perceived more quickly, and recovered their equilibrium more quickly. "Meditation practice is not simply a relaxed state, but the capacity for focused attention," said the report. It speculated that what this capacity for focused attention did was to unlink the cortical and limbic systems, that is, the thinking and perceiving system and the autonomic and emotional system. Thus the meditators were not only quicker to return to equilibrium and more at home in that state, but also more alert. "A wakeful, hypometabolic state," Benson and Wallace had written, but the emphasis seemed to be on the relaxation, on the word "hypometabolic." The meditators were also "wakeful," though there was not as much attention on that.

Of course, for busy people, there was the problem of when and where to meditate. For commuters in buses and trains, the commuting time is ideal. It looks like you're just catching a little nap. But for commuters who drive to work, there's a problem: you have to keep your eyes open while driving. (Advanced meditators in other techniques might be able to do it.)

What about noncommuters? What about busy people in mid-city?

"We have the solution," said some friends. "Churches."

"Churches?"

"Sure, churches are the one place in the middle of a city that are quiet and respect silence. Some of them even say, Enter, rest, and pray. So you go in, you slip into the last pew, and you do your mantra for twenty minutes. It's terrific. You can do it on the way to lunch, or after work."

I tried it myself. Churches were indeed the solution—the only place open in mid-city that respected silence, other than the public library. Fabulous! Sometimes the organist would be practicing—that didn't hurt the meditation at all. Sometimes I looked at the very few other people in the church—what was in their minds? Mantras in what language? Were they asking for something or were they meditating?

We meditators were so grateful for the churches that we began dropping dollar bills in the collection box. It seemed proper and felt good.

So now upwards of a million people must be going gazoom, gazoom to themselves on the bus, or breathing in one nostril and out the other, or humming One at the end of each breath. And it works! They all work! Maybe the curve for tranquilizer sales is about to turn down. Our commercial society led us to believe we did not have health, we had to buy it. Who would have thought we could get such a boost from the yogis? □

THE NEWS

From each house on the street,
the blue light of the news.
Someone's dog whirps three times
and scuffs the leaves.
It's quiet, a school night.
The President and his helpers
live at one end of the news,
parents at the other.
The news for today
is tape recordings
of dry ice, sports
for today is weather.
Lights go back into the walls.
These might as well be
my neighbors. The news
uses us all to travel by.
I might as well be one
of their children, bees
sleeping the treaty of honey.
The news will find me soon.
I veer between
two of their houses
home through the woods.

by William Matthews

A WOMAN OF CHARACTER

A story by Ward Just



In telling her story, which she was happy to do from time to time, Sally did not varnish the truth. She spoke of her life with impetuous candor, fully describing both her achievements and her mistakes. She did not neglect her personal life either, though reporters did not seem especially interested in it. Questions about her son, Charlie, usually came at the end of the interview, and were asked out of a sense of politeness. Yes, she had come to Washington in the first year of the Kennedy Administration. Yes, she had one son aged twelve. No, she was not married nor did she believe in marriage. "I was married for a year but it didn't work out."

She was friendly with the political correspondent of one of the Chicago papers, having grown up in Chicago where her father, now dead, had been a well-known trial lawyer. Sally Sutton was vaguely "known" in the region the newspaper called Chicagoland. She'd watched with amusement and fascination her passage through the news columns of the paper, as she fed the political correspondent bits and pieces of information. In ten years, she'd advanced from "source" to "knowledgeable source" to "well-informed source" to "highly placed official." She imagined that one day there would be a magic moment in Chicago journalism when she would be a proper noun instead of an adjective: knowledgeable, well-informed, highly placed Sally Sutton.

Sally did not lack detachment or a sense of irony, but she was fiercely proud of what she'd done and the person she'd become.

She was one who'd succeeded on sheer animal energy, though for years her various bosses re-

garded her as one more starstruck political dilettante. Her personal style was deceptive and tended to conceal her ability. The first to take notice of her was a congressman who observed that she was "that rarity" among women, a born administrator. She'd laughed and thanked him and said, Yes, lacking natural rhythm she'd turned to administration instead. The congressman was mystified: how could she work so hard at the office and raise a young boy as well? Her reply was uncharacteristically oblique. "I couldn't do any of it without Charlie," she said.

Eventually she was hired by the National Committee after years on Capitol Hill. The job paid \$30,000 a year, plus perks, and if they ever elected a President, she'd be in line for an important political appointment. She was eager for it, believing herself extremely disorganized on the outside but tidy within. She knew her good qualities: at the office she was single-minded and a shrewd judge of people and generally high-spirited, though she often slid into depressions. The depressions: she believed they were a function of the times, like pollution and war. She'd been lucky enough to discover a practical though cynical psychiatrist who listened patiently for a month, then told her to go home. Forget it. Relax. Of course she was depressed sometimes, depression was a fundamental condition of the human organism no less than of national economies. He told her to think of them as temporary recessions, downturns, cyclical, inevitable. She'd hesitated; it sounded too easy, though the explanation appealed to her sense of humor. She'd asked him, Do you think I need a husband—someone permanent? The psychiatrist laughed and said, Sure. Perhaps. Then you could deal with his

depressions as well as your own, and of course he could deal with yours and possibly that would be a comfort. Doubtless it would. Then you could both come and see me on alternate days and I'd get \$150 a week from you and from him, too. Then I could afford to see a psychiatrist, or perhaps spend the winter in Jamaica. He'd laughed again; depression was a perfectly normal neurotic condition. She'd asked him seriously about the boy, what effect did her depressions have on him? And what about the way she lived? The psychiatrist shrugged; he didn't know about the boy. The boy sounded all right to him. What did she want? Vat is it you vimmen vant? he roared in a mock-Viennese accent. Where did she think she was living, Plato's Republic?

He said, "I'm sure there are dozens of unresolved conflicts, and you've got a pretty good case of the guilties about the kid. But I don't believe the conflicts are serious or in any way out of the ordinary, and you know in your heart you're an attentive mother and that the guilties, therefore, are not warranted. You know that. Hell, Sally, you're not some silly housewife with only her orgasms or her bridge games to worry about. You've lived, you've been around—"

"I appreciate the thought," she said dryly.

"I suppose you want me to be supportive. Okay, I'll be supportive. You're clever, you're healthy, you've got looks. Your sex life satisfies you, and God knows it's varied. You love to laugh. You're good at what you do and you're well paid for it. I've got women who would give their left tit—"

She laughed, "You're a con man!"

"The Ponzi of the profession," he said.

"And a cynic."

"Baby, that's how I survive."

"And you've been trying to get me into bed from the first day I walked into this office."

"Sally, you're a peach."

So that night they had dinner together and he seduced her, or perhaps it was the other way around, and that was the end of her formal therapy.



he had an episodic love affair with the psychiatrist, who appealed to her because he cared nothing about politics. He heard enough about politics in his office; he did not care to hear about them in bed. It was a relationship that suited her because both of them maintained absolutely separate identities: no professional competition, no sexual minuets. It was tricky because when the depressions came upon her she wanted to talk about them with him, and that bothered her because she felt she should be paying for the privilege. It was

like sleeping with a lawyer and asking him for tax advice. Sally prided herself on her understanding of mutual interests, her deft estimates of how much should be given and how much taken in any transaction. It was one reason for her success in politics; she learned very early that temporary advantage nearly always led to long-term loss. Except of course with enemies, that was different; with enemies, you used every trick you knew. But with friends the best agreement was an equal agreement, one in which all parties left the table satisfied that they'd gotten what they wanted, or most of what they wanted; in any case, what they had to have. To an outsider it might sound bloodless, but it was important and pertinent to Sally. She'd worked too hard establishing her independence to throw it away lightly.

They were reading in bed when she turned to him. It was serious and she respected his judgment, and she made it plain that in talking to him she was asking a favor from a friend. But she wanted his professional opinion.

She said, "Sam, I have to talk to you about something. I got a call from Charles at the office this morning. He was calling from Chicago with what he said was a 'dynamite idea.' He wants Charlie to come and live with him full time. I'd have exactly the same visiting rights that Charles does now. Those are unlimited, no problems there. Charles and Charlie would live in Winnetka. He says it's very important for a son to know his father."

Sam lit a cigarette and looked at her. "And what was your first reaction?"

"Hostile," she said. "Very hostile. Maybe it's selfish, but that boy is part of my life and I'm part of his. Sending him to Winnetka would be like sending him to . . . Cairo. A completely different culture for God's sake, Charles probably belongs to a country club. Look, I've raised him and I provide for him . . ." She shuddered. "A country club. Where they probably don't even allow Jews. Or Irish. I don't know anybody who isn't Jewish or Irish, and Charlie doesn't either. He's comfortable here, and the fact of the matter is that I'm a damned good mother."

He smiled. "You are a good mother."

"Very funny," Sally said sharply.

"I don't understand the objection, though. Is it political? Are you saying that Charles's A.D.A. rating isn't high enough to suit you? He's the boy's *father*, not his congressman."

Sally laughed. "Okay, touché."

"Is he a son of a bitch?"

"No, not a son of a bitch. As I've explained, he's one of those let's-lower-our-voices-and-be-reasonable people. One of those types. It's weird, we never got along. Never did, never would."

"Why never?"

"Second law of thermodynamics," she said.

"While it is perfectly obvious that heat always passes from a warm body to a cold one, it is not so obvious that the reverse is never true. You think it's obvious but it isn't. It isn't obvious at all."

"I thought you were a politician, not a physicist."

"Works in politics, too." She sighed. "The trouble is, maybe Charles has a point."

He did not reply for a moment. Then he spoke to her very quietly. "Sally, you are talking about something *else*."

She shrugged sadly and lit a cigarette. "I don't want him to go away," she said. "I do not expect you to understand this entirely, but for ten years that boy has been part of everything I've done. When he was a baby I had to borrow from my mother to have a person live in while I was working. And I had to organize my life in order to spend as much time with him as I could without getting angry or resentful about it. I'm proud of what I've done. If we can get Numbnuts elected President, I'm going to have a very, very good job. I mean top of the line, probably in the White House. I've done that all alone, by myself, no help from anybody. At the same time I've raised Charlie. And brought home the bread. Now that I've done all that and Charlie is just reaching the age where he can fend for himself, when our life here really makes sense, that goddamned father who never did anything when it counted wants him—"

"What's so hard to understand about that?"

"Well, some people don't."

"But you've got to understand your true motives."

"I know," she said miserably.

"You're worried about the way you live, you think you're disorderly. You wonder about the effect on him and you begin to lose your nerve." He kissed her and smiled reassuringly. "You're a libertine on the outside but on the inside you're square as hell." She laughed; it was true. She adored men and men adored her and God knows her life did not run on schedule. But did that matter? Charlie was growing up without illusions, except the best illusion of all: he knew that she loved life, loved what she did, offered no apologies, and took responsibility for her actions.

"I can't let him grow up the way Charles grew up. *I can't do that*."

"What does he do? I've forgotten."

"What do you mean? Job? Well, as I told you, he screwed around for ten years. When we were first married he joined a third-rate law firm. He was there about a year and then dropped out but went back later. When one of the partners left to

join a chemical company, Charles left with him. That was oh, five years ago. All of a sudden he's vice president of the chemical company and lives in Winnetka. Big deal."

"You mean he's successful."

"Not as successful as me," she said.



he note was short and formal. Charles was coming to Washington on business. Could he have dinner with her? The Mayflower, eight o'clock? The Mayflower, she thought; that was typical. The dining room of the Mayflower, first choice for big butter-and-egg men. She wrote him back that dinner would be all right, but why didn't they meet at Le Steak instead. Better food, warmer atmosphere. She'd meet him at the small bar in front of the restaurant; they could rendezvous there at eight-thirty, after work. She'd have her secretary make the reservations.

She knew what she was doing and disliked herself for doing it.

Sally arrived at nine to a chorus of greetings from the *patrón* and a table of journalists near the door. It took her a few moments to extract herself from the journalists. She found Charles at the end of the bar, pretending not to notice her arrival. She reflected that only by wearing earplugs could he have ignored the cries of welcome.

She said, "I'm sorry I'm late. A meeting. Tied up."

He said, "I only just got here."

It was apparently true. The bill in front of him showed a single drink and that was resting at his elbow, untouched. She looked to see if the ice had melted, but it had not. Round One to Charles, except as she looked at him she knew he was not aware of any of it. He'd grown heavier, almost ponderous, and his hair was thinning at the top. He'd always looked younger than he was, he'd always looked the youngest man in the room; now he looked older. He was dressed in a muted glen plaid suit and a striped tie, a uniform from the 1950s. Her attitude suddenly softened; at least he didn't dye his hair or wear double-knits. He'd always been hesitant and a bit vague, and now his manner was weightier than she remembered. She hadn't seen him in two years.

She'd arranged for a table in the rear of the restaurant. All the tables were close together, but by ten o'clock the place would begin to thin out and they would have privacy enough to talk. She'd arranged it that way; she wanted to get a sense of him before they got into the question of Charlie. So they talked casually. Charles was never a very precise man; he spoke to her as if reading from a poorly prepared lawyer's brief, using as much psychology as he was capable of using.

Ward Just is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* whose new novel, *Nicholson At Large*, has just been published.

A Woman of Character

"You've done very well, Sally," he said in his careful voice. "I see your name in the paper occasionally. I came across your name in the paper the other day, some political thing . . ."

"What connection?"

"Well, you know I don't follow politics anymore. Don't have the time or the interest. Is there an important race in California?"

"Oh, that. Yes, there are two actually, one for the Senate and the other for the governorship . . ."

"They quoted you about some polls that had been taken."

"Damn them," she said. "It was supposed to be a background interview, no names. Well, I haven't heard anything about it, so no one saw the piece. No one sees the Chicago papers here."

He smiled. "A background, was it? Secretive Sally, the woman of mystery."

She looked at him, wondering if he meant to cut her. Probably not, he was too obtuse for that. "A tomb of secrets, that's me."

"Well," he said awkwardly. "It must be quite a lot of fun, and profitable too, I suppose. I think you've done damned well. Really damned well . . . this success . . ." She smiled, though she did not care for open praise. She preferred the style of politicians, which was to make a joke when they wanted to pass a compliment.

"What about you?" she asked. "This new job."

"It's rather funny, as a matter of fact. My company that everyone thought was going to be a bust isn't a bust after all. It's quite a success and I'm in on the ground floor." He grinned disarmingly. "A new experience for me. For the first time in my life I've got some money and that's one of the reasons I want to talk about Charlie. You've done a wonderful job with Charlie. I can't imagine anyone doing any better. But at this time in his life he needs a . . . father."

"Why now, particularly, rather than ten years ago? Or five? What, you think he's going to turn into a woman or something?" When he looked at her sourly, she turned away. "Sorry, but this whole thing makes me nervous."

"All I'm proposing is that we reverse the situation."

She laughed. "Oh, is that all?"

"—Well, the truth is that I've got a responsibility and I want to meet it. And the other thing is this. All the shrinks say that children have got to *know* their parents, the good and the bad. Charlie doesn't know me. He sees me on vacations, he doesn't see me leading a normal life. Forget for the moment whether my life is a life you approve of. I assume that you don't. But it's different from yours, that's the main point. Half of that kid is *me*. If he doesn't come to know who I am or what I'm about he'll never come to understand himself . . ."

"And what are you about, Charles?"

He took her hand, and then released it. "I'm about to order another bottle of wine."

"Well, you look very prosperous."

"I'm making up for the lean years."

The remark stung her. She remembered him coming home from the office the year they were in Washington. They had very few friends and spent evenings plotting their rise in Camelot. Empty dreams: they never came close, and she knew that it would never happen; he would never fit into the town. He had no instinct for it. He was bright enough and personable enough but he had no instinct, and would not persevere. Everyone then was placing bets, and he was not a gambler. Bright, someone had said, but not attached to anything. She said, "You look older."

"I know it, and I don't mind. I suppose it's partly the new job, the responsibility."

"And now you want to be responsible for Charlie."

"That's it. I believe he needs a full-time father."

She thought of her cynical psychiatrist. What would he have said? They never talked about Charlie in those terms. She remembered him saying that if the boy seemed happy, all was well. Don't worry. Never fret. Go home. Relax. She felt herself being edged into a corner and she didn't like it. "Why this concern, all of a sudden?"

He looked at her. "People change, Sally. People really do change. And the truth is, I couldn't afford him before. I couldn't afford a housekeeper during the days. And I didn't want him, that's the truth too. I could invent other reasons but those are the main ones. Those sleazy apartments I lived in. Half of what I made went to you."

"Some months, not others," she said.

"Do you think," he said evenly, "do you think we can bury that particular part of the past and concentrate on the present? We can't remake or repair what's gone before. And who would want to? They were bad years." He smiled. "Can't we begin now, ground zero so to speak?" He turned to search for the waiter, his hand half raised. When he caught the waiter's eye he pointed at the empty wine bottle and motioned for another. It seemed to her out of character and she wondered why. Then she remembered. In the old days he would have asked her if they needed another bottle, and if so, which one. Then he would have gone ahead and done what he was going to do anyway.

"It would mean quite a change in my life," she said.

"Mine, too."

"Understand this. For the first time in a long time my life is ordered the way I want it. Charlie is part of it, part and parcel. Perhaps in some ways Charlie is responsible for it—"

"In what way?" He stared at her; she thought he was about to press an advantage.

"Well, it's not important." She saw him watching

her, a slight smile on his face; the smile irritated her, it was almost a smirk. A salesman's smile; she supposed he used it in his business. "Charlie has never been better. Top marks in school. He's something of an athlete. He . . ." She could not understand why she was on the defensive.

He said, "Maybe we ought to ask *him*."

She quickly shook her head. "No, I would never put a child in that position. A child of that age, are you seriously proposing that I ask him to choose between his mother—, between you and me? No. Not on your life. There's no way I'm going to do that. Absolutely not. From your point of view that's a ridiculous suggestion; you know very well who he'd choose."

"All right, perhaps that's not such a smart idea."

"No. It is not."

"But just on the general principle. Think about *his* life for a moment. Not mine. Not yours. *His* life."

"I am," she said.

"For one thing, I can't believe that Charlie's a bed of roses twenty-four hours a day. At times he's got to be a pain in the ass."

"Of course," she said.

"All right, you like to have fun. God knows you always liked to have fun. If Charlie were living with me, it would give you freedom you've never had before."

She looked away. How possibly could she have more freedom than she had now? Charlie was not a burden to her, he was part of her life. He was part of the freedom that she had. He was part of its definition. Without Charlie her life would be less free because it would be less tidy. She meant her inner life, which was the only life that counted. He did not inhibit her, except perhaps occasionally. But it was nothing serious. Freedom did not mean license. That was anarchy. She was not an anarchist, she did not want to lead her life as one.

"Will you let me talk to Charlie about it?"

"No!"

"We can talk to him together, the three of us. We can work it out. I promise I'll put on no undue pressure. We can work it out as a family."

"But we're not a family," she said harshly. "We've never been a family."

"Well, we can try. We can try this once." He leaned across the table; their hands were almost touching. She tried to remember what there had been about him that had so attracted her, and recalled at once that it was his sincerity. His apparent solidity. His imperturbability and earnestness. Reliable Charles. Serious. Sober. Responsible. Fair. Or seemed to be fair; his language was always moderate. Charles saw both sides of every question and never forced an issue. His mother had probably warned him that it was bad manners to force anything. But he was forcing this issue: perhaps it meant that he was at last settled and secure.

"Sally, I want some time with my *son*. I want something continuous."

She felt herself compelled by his logic. His reasonableness against her desire.

He looked at her across the wine glass. "My spies tell me you're quite the hot property. Politically."

She laughed. "That's me."

"Weren't you working for some congressman before this job?"

She shook her head. Charles never followed politics. Elections to him were like the box scores of baseball games to her, so many meaningless statistics. The congressman had been the subject of a cover story in *Time* and nightly reports on the television networks. She said, "He was defeated. By the astronaut, remember?" She watched the slow dawn of recognition, or feigned recognition; it was ludicrous, like a comedian's double take in a silent movie. She said patiently, "I'm working now for the National Committee."

"Yes," he said. "I know that. But doing what?"

"This and that," she said. It was pointless to discuss it in any detail.

"Well, is it a secret?" He laughed. "Like the formula for New Blue Cheer?"

Why was she on the defensive? *Why?* "As a matter of fact, it is," she lied.

"You're on the road quite a lot."

She said, "One or two trips a month." Then she added, "About as often as you are."

He poured the last of the wine into his glass. Hers was still full. "Yes," he said.

"I will think about Charlie. I'll write you next week. It's a big step. I'll let you know."

Charles looked at her for a long moment. At last he said, "At least we've never been enemies."



he drove him to his hotel and then returned to her own house in Georgetown. She wanted to be where she could think straight. When she dropped him off at the Mayflower, he'd muttered something vague about his "rights" and how nasty it would

be for everyone concerned if they had to go to lawyers "to settle it." She did not respond. When he was out of the car she simply drove away.

She wandered into the kitchen and poured herself a glass of milk, then thought better of it and made a weak highball. She turned toward the stairs, but thought better of that, too; she needed to think straight by herself. She moved into the library and stood staring out the window. A single fact: she had never thought of the boy as *his*. For the first five years of Charlie's life, Charles was never there. At that time he was in the process of "finding himself." (So much for her estimate of his

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character, sober, responsible, reliable Charles.) Now he'd fetched up on the shores of Winnetka and that was typical. He'd grown up in a suburb and now he was back there, free to pursue his conception of the well-modulated life. She thought that in the most complete sense the boy was *not* his. He was Sam's as much as he was Charles's. And had been Peter's before he had been Sam's. She smiled to herself; that was *definitely* the wrong train of thought. Before Sam, Peter. Before Peter, Alex. Before Alex . . . all the way back to the Englishman, Ian. The man with the funny accent who told ghost stories. When she came home at night and when she woke up in the morning, Charlie was always there. Others came and went, but Charlie was always there, constant, faithful. And no, she was not mistaking her twelve-year-old son for a husband or lover. He was exactly what he was, Charlie, a twelve-year-old boy *whom she provided for*. Who was part of her life. He was as happy as any of the other children she knew, the progeny of cheerful, durable marriages (to the extent there were any in Washington; most of the married people she knew seemed to go through life with clenched teeth). To take Charlie out of her environment, in which he was perfectly secure and at ease, and thrust him into Winnetka . . .

She sat in the big leather chair in the library, staring at her books and half listening to the stereo. She'd put on a recording of the MJQ and turned it low. Drawn back against her will into her own childhood, she saw her father sitting where she was sitting, in a leather chair in a library. Her big, careless father, who seemed to gulp life like a swimmer perpetually surfacing from under water. He was the source of her energy and her pride and her ambition. He was the source, but not the sustenance. She wished she could ask his advice; he was always very good about advice. She would not be bound to follow it, but at least she would have it. She concentrated, recalling various typical pronouncements of her father's. She sought gravity, but in her memory there were only wisecracks.

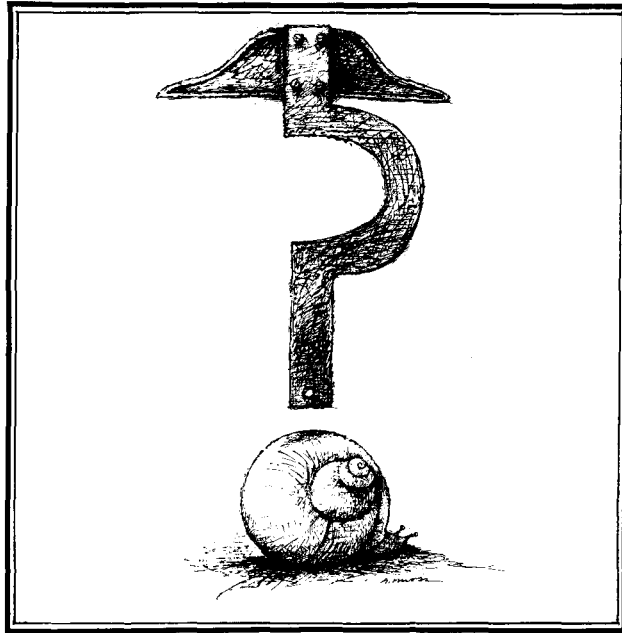
. . . Well, perhaps that was narrow and snobbish of her. Winnetka wasn't the end of the world. A number of people lived there and seemed to thrive. But she didn't think they'd have any connection, Charles and the boy. She'd taken him to

meetings, encouraged him to read the newspapers and the news magazines, and four years before, they'd attended the convention at Miami Beach. They'd talk politics at the breakfast table: who was up and who was down in the Senate; where Big Labor was going in November; whether the young southern governor had a chance; the idiocies of the opposition. Charles knew nothing of this world and cared less. It was impossible; for Charlie, Winnetka would be a death sentence.

She hugged her knees and looked around the room. There was a photograph on the mantle, she and Charlie on a sloop on the Chesapeake Bay with friends. The wind was blowing their hair, and Sam had caught them in a look-alike moment. She stared at the picture and thought of herself and the boy standing together against the world, so loose, their lives fused, each a part of the other. In the background, the congressman grinned for the camera: it was an unaffected smile of paternity for them both. Her eyes welled up and she saw her life in Kodachrome: her son had his arm lightly around her waist, they were clowning together. His head was high (as tall as she was, now), her hand rested on his shoulder. They were unconfined, separate centers of gravity, but they were connected, too. They depended, each on the other—not for support alone but for love. That boy was hers, no one else's.

No, she thought. She would not do it. She knew how to fight and she would fight like hell. He could get himself another son to love. And he was quite wrong in what he'd said. They were enemies, always had been. She knew it, and so did he.

She turned back to the photograph, crying freely now. God, she loved it. She loved her life and what it meant. In this life you took what you wanted. She turned toward the stairs, momentarily confused. You took what you wanted, when you wanted it badly enough. That was what you had to do. "*I mean to survive*," she said aloud. Sally hurried up the stairs, stumbling once, then moved down the long hallway to his bedroom door. She hesitated, her hand on the knob. She stood motionless for a long moment, then turned away. No, she did not need an accomplice. She released the knob and stood listening for a sound, any sound apart from the beating of her own heart. □



CAN TECHNOLOGY SOLVE THE HOUSING CRISIS?

by Peter Blake

Prefabrication, modular units, systems building—the terms symbolize one of modern architecture's fondest dreams: applying sophisticated technology to the construction industry. But according to the author, the future of housing belongs to men who understand hammers and nails, bricks and mortar.

Much about life in America seems to be bad at the moment, but nowhere else are things as bad as they are in the building industry: mortgage interest rates are extortionate, construction costs are ridiculous, unemployment figures are catastrophic, and the annual per capita production of housing is probably below that of Upper Volta.

In 1968, carried by a surge of optimism and of vision, President Johnson and the U.S. Congress committed themselves to a program that would create 2.5 million “units” of housing annually over the subsequent ten years. This amount of new construction was thought to be minimal if we were to replace slums and provide for population growth.

But toward the end of 1974, the U.S. housing industry was producing new homes and apartments at an annual rate of considerably below one million—or at less than 40 percent of the rate envisaged by the 1968 Housing Act.

Why? Well, the most obvious reason is that nobody except mortgage bankers can afford to buy or to rent the new houses or apartments we are building; so-called “middle-income” apartments currently planned for several major U.S. cities will have to rent for close to \$150 a room per month—or about \$750 a month for a family with two children. That is attributable in large part to President Nixon's decision, in January, 1973, to kill almost all federal subsidies for low- and middle-income housing. That decision alone increased the rate of room rentals in many housing developments by 300 to 400 percent.

Another reason for the failure of the U.S. housing industry to perform (and for the monstrous increase in housing costs) is this: for a very long time, almost every housing expert in the United States and in the rest of the developed world has advocated systems of industrialized building—especially systems to mass-produce housing—that were based upon theories that had very little to do with building in the real world.

The real world is here, and the responsibility for

what is about to happen when our fellow citizens—not to mention our compatriots elsewhere on earth—demand decent housing rests in considerable part with the architects of this century. Specifically, it rests with the modern movement in architecture, which has, since the 1920s, made the mass production of decent habitats its primary objective and concern.

From its inception in the mid-nineteenth century, the modern movement was preoccupied with the urge to catch up with the industrial revolution.

The industrial revolution had replaced hand-crafting of singly made objects with mechanization and mass production of large numbers of identical objects. It had also, of course, introduced mechanization in many other areas—mining, agriculture, transportation, and so on—in which the final product was a commodity, a raw material, or a service. In architecture, the greatest need appeared to be the mass production of buildings, or of building components that could be assembled rapidly to satisfy the needs of a fast-growing population.

Efforts to mechanize, standardize, and mass-produce architecture were made as early as 1849, when James Bogardus, a remarkable American inventor, patented a system for the construction of buildings made up of standardized panels of cast iron and glass. Some of his earliest work in curtain-wall prefabrication still stands in lower Manhattan. These cast-iron and glass facades, by Bogardus and his many imitators, are as “all glass” as Manhattan’s Seagram Building, completed by Mies van der Rohe a hundred years later. Only in certain relatively insignificant details does the wall of the Seagram Building represent a technological advance over the work of earlier pioneers.

In fact, very little has happened in the industrialization of building since the mid-nineteenth century, but it has not been for lack of trying. The architects of the so-called International Style—especially Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and their followers in Europe and elsewhere between the two World Wars—were literally obsessed with the ideal of some sort of modular building system, in which walls, floors, roofs, partitions, and all the rest would be prefabricated, under controlled conditions, on the assembly lines of modern factories; then shipped to whatever site was in need of these precisely machined, modular units; and finally snapped or bolted or zipped together in a jiffy so as to form neatly finished houses or apartment blocks, or schools, factories, offices and so forth, each a monument to rational building and to the cool art of the machine.

The idea was that buildings could thus be pro-

duced rapidly enough to keep up with population growth; that on-site labor time could be reduced to an absolute minimum because such labor, being adversely affected by poor weather, was inherently inefficient; and, finally, that the qualities of finish, inside and out, that so distinguished other mass-produced objects (like automobiles) could, at long last, begin to distinguish buildings as well. (A further objective was to create modular building types that could be *un-snapped*, *un-bolted*, and *un-zipped* just as easily as they had been assembled—on the theory that future generations might wish to add to or subtract from their buildings, or even disassemble them and move them to another site.)

None of these objectives has been attained to date. Instead, in the United States and in other developed nations, numerous adventurous souls who have gone into prefabrication (or “systems building”—the latest slogan, presumably designed to wipe out all memories of earlier disasters in “prefabrication”) have gone into bankruptcy. Indeed, the building industry around the world is littered with the graveyards of heroic, would-be prefabricators—and their equally heroic public and private backers—who believed in all the theories and were demolished by the facts. More than a hundred years after James Bogardus, just about the only U.S. building products *really* prefabricated in standard, modular units or sizes are bricks and sticks. Rolled steel sections (I-shaped, H-shaped, L- or U-shaped) are indeed prefabricated—in several hundred “standard” sizes; and so are some windows, doors, pipes, and lightbulbs. All of these “standard” building products are manufactured in hundreds of different sizes, materials, colors, finishes, and weights; which makes them about as “standard” (and interchangeable) as ink blots.

In the United States today, it is virtually impossible to assemble a building from modular components routinely available on the market without introducing innumerable special details or components that would instantly increase the cost of such a “rational” building to a point far above that of a comparable, conventionally built structure. In 1970, a building I designed was completed at a cost well below the budget drawn by the public authorities. It was a “modern” building in every respect—except technology. Everything in that rather sizable building (with the exception of a few plastic skylights and a number of essential utilities) could have been constructed better and more cheaply almost a hundred years earlier. Had I designed this building to be technologically “modern” as well—an assemblage of factory-made components—it would have exceeded the assigned budget by 25 to 50 percent, and the client (a public authority—i.e. your servant and mine) would have been sued by the taxpayers for squandering their hard-earned dollars on some harebrained experiment.

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My own limited experience is not an isolated example. It is a simple fact, rarely admitted by those who are ideologically or financially committed to current systems of "industrialized building," that prefabricated developments, from Habitat in Montreal to Thamesmead outside London, have almost invariably cost much more to construct than comparable, conventionally built structures. Claims to the contrary, made almost daily by sophisticated critics as well as by less sophisticated journalists, are almost invariably false, and tend to perpetuate some dangerous myths. Charles Jencks, a highly perceptive historian, wrote in 1973, in his *Modern Movements in Architecture*, that the celebrated "Schools Construction System Development," or SCSD, "became both successful in California and influential throughout the world." "In California," Jencks continued, "at least thirteen schools had been built with it by 1966, at substantial savings, and thousands of entrepreneurs had appropriated the (SCSD) sub-systems for their own particular requirements." With all due respect for Jencks and the creators of the SCSD system, this statement is substantially false. As for journalistic misstatements, *Time*, in its issue of July 15, 1974, reported that Moshe Safdie, the builder of Habitat in Montreal, had "built a second Habitat as a low-income housing development in Puerto Rico." Safdie deserves all the credit in the world for having *realized* Habitat in 1967—for good designers of such projects are a dime a dozen, but performance is what really counts, and Safdie performed magically and incredibly in Montreal. Still, the builders of that second Habitat in Puerto Rico might convincingly dispute the claim that their project was low-income, or low-cost, or completed at all.

Other public claims usually cite Buckminster Fuller's "geodesic domes" as superman's gift to ordinary man in the area of industrialized housing. Fuller, a man of great integrity, never made such claims. In fact, his most significant experiments in the field of housing had to do with the prefabrication of service units—a truly brilliant insight, offered by Fuller as early as the 1930s, while everybody else was still preoccupied with houses of cards, or of equally unstable "panel systems." Still, hardly a day passes without some chanted eulogy to the geodesic dome as the cure-all of the modern scene.

Even some of Buckminster Fuller's intrepid backers are not unanimously enchanted with the economics of their experiments. Fuller's prototypes have cost more to produce than their conventional equivalents; but then, prototypes usually do, and Fuller's were at least immensely rational. Other prototypes, by less intelligent innovators, were not. Not only their prototypes but also their stereotypes tended or promised to be outrageously expensive—and they further tended or promised to take much longer to complete than conventional

equivalents. That was the final straw: speed of construction had always been the one irrefutable justification advanced by proponents of prefabrication.

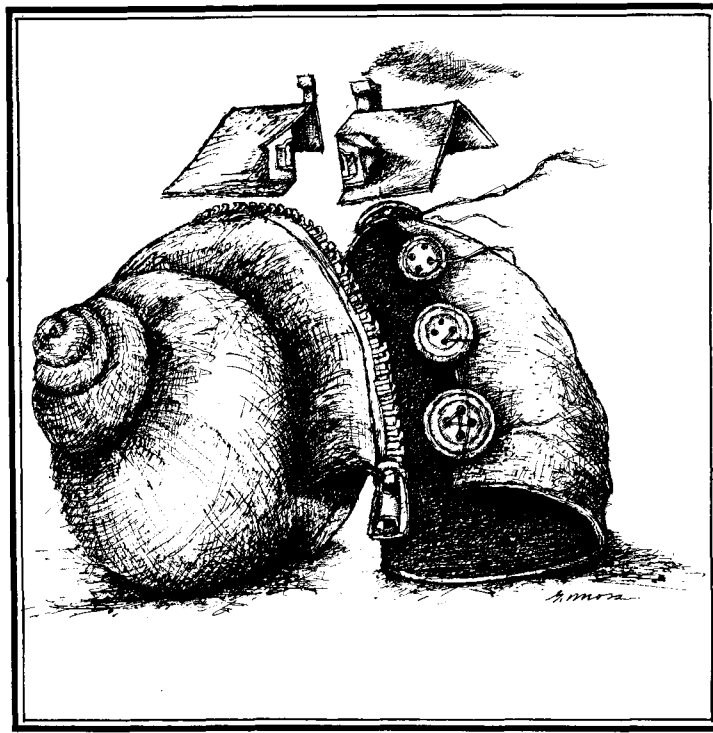
There are several reasons for the monumental failure of true prefabrication in the United States. The most obvious ones are these:

First, there cannot be any true prefabrication of building components unless and until the nation's building industry agrees to adhere, rigorously, to a set of dimensional and qualitative standards. In a free society, in which manufacturers of building components are at liberty to concentrate upon clobbering the competition rather than collaborating with it, the tendency is for each manufacturer to establish standards that will be as different as possible from those of all his competitors. A manufacturer of kitchen appliances, for example, makes a point of scaling and coloring his wares so that they cannot easily be used in conjunction with those of another manufacturer. The reason, of course, is that the manufacturer wants his customers to use *only his* products. Thus it is highly unlikely that dimensional and qualitative standardization, without which true prefabrication is unthinkable, can be impressed upon today's U.S. building industry—either by persuasion or by force.

Second, mass production of large building components can occur only where there is mass consumption—that is, a smooth and even flow of distribution. This means that dealerships must be set up around the country, with their own warehousing and financing facilities, so that the manufacturing plant can be assured of a steady demand—which, in turn, will keep assembly lines rolling at top efficiency.

Unfortunately, no such distribution networks have been set up; and it is doubtful that they can be, given the innumerable special requirements of local building codes and of different climatic conditions across this continent.

Third, the very size of the United States creates severe difficulties in achieving economical mass distribution. Most present-day manufacturers of prefabricated houses—those who are still struggling along—have found that they cannot compete, in terms of price, with the locally and conventionally built product beyond a radius of about 150 miles from their manufacturing plant. This means that each manufacturing plant is severely limited in the size of its potential market, and therefore in the efficiency and economy of its assembly-line operation. Prefabrication plants, like all other plants, begin to become efficient and competitive only when the volume of their production approaches maximum capacity. But if the market is limited in size, and fragmented by conflicting requirements, such



plants will rarely come even close to reaching their maximum capacity.

Fourth, the highly individualistic character of a free enterprise society such as ours seems to resist standardization at every turn. Henry Ford may have said, about his Model T, that "they can have it in any color so long as it's black," but Mr. Ford's heirs seem to have found the market for black cars somewhat limited outside the confines of the mortuary trade. Although Americans lead lives shaped largely by identical, standardized products and services, they prefer to think that they do not: the early, post-World War II houses in Levittown have been so radically altered by their inhabitants that the original standardized shells are now unrecognizable.

Many of the building trades unions have fought prefabrication because it seemed to threaten the livelihoods of their members. Although national and international headquarters of some unions have long paid lip-service to the idea of mass-produced building, local unions almost everywhere continue to resist the idea in principle as well as in practice. Shortly after the end of World War II, an enterprising manufacturer decided to mass-produce a so-called "service core"—a complete "package" containing kitchen, bathroom, and utility room, with all fixtures, pipes, ducts, and wires in place, ready to be plunked down in any typical suburban house. The first twenty of these beautifully designed and beautifully made "packages" arrived on a site near Detroit, where local plumbers and local electricians promptly refused to install them. Finally, after nine months of debate (during which the units, parked on a sidewalk, were exposed to weather and vandalism), the local unions agreed to handle the "packages"—by disassembling them, piece by piece, and then reassembling them in each of the houses. The manufacturer, needless to say, went out of business.

Union obstructionism is a little more sophisticated now. In New York City, it is impossible to install a well-designed and well-engineered modular ceiling "package" in an office building, because the powerful local unions have insisted that the installation (a very rapid and simple process) must be attended by one electrician, one sheet-metal worker, and one plumber—in addition to the mechanic needed to snap the ceiling "package" into place. The resulting installation thus costs almost twice as much as a conventionally assembled ceiling system of comparable design. Examples of similar obstructionism are legion.

Finally, there is a further reason for the failure of prefabrication in the United States to date, and it is the result of certain historical twists and turns.

The notion of modular standardization—building panels of identical size, joined together quickly on the site—was largely of European origin, and was brought to the United States just before World War II. The notion made considerable sense under European building conditions: on-site labor was cheap, so the on-site assembly of a great many prefabricated panels presented no serious economic problems. But building materials were expensive, so that the prefabrication of building panels, with its attendant elimination of wasted metals, plastics, and so on, promised some significant overall savings.

In the United States the reverse is true: materials are relatively cheap and labor is relatively expensive. So the basic principle of the panelized building, constructed of quantities of modular units, all joined together (on the site) along literally miles of seams that had to be made weather-tight, did not apply. Many wonderfully inventive designers spent decades, if not lifetimes, trying to perfect the perfect universal joint—the magic me-

chanical device that would join their modular panels together (with the possibility of some future disengagement). But it was all in vain. Many of the universal joints, the seams, the gaskets, the unbelievably ingenious interlocking connectors leaked, wracked, delaminated, or experienced some sort of materiel fatigue. Yet jointitis (a disease increasingly prevalent among theorists in prefabrication) continued to spread. One of prefabrication's most illustrious pioneers designed a joint for the connection of two or more wooden panels; it was a miracle of ingenuity, and required little more from the on-site joiners than a doctorate in Chinese puzzling. The pioneer, it seemed, had never been told of an earlier and less sophisticated joint, used in wood framing, known as the nail.

The "celebration of the joint"—the elaborate articulation of every seam, of every connection in the making of a building—became almost a moral issue for most modern architects. It may have begun with the Russian Constructivists, whose (largely unbuilt) projects of the years after 1917 were monuments to mechanization and industrialization. To them, the image of the machine was a sort of animal made up of clearly articulated elements of steel, glass, and other "modern" materials, joined visibly and expressively so that each element retained its own identity and its interaction with all other elements was left unmistakably clear. It was a charming—and charmingly naïve—image of the machine age; and it left its imprint, indelibly, upon architects of the International Style. In certain kinds of panelized or otherwise prefabricated buildings, the joint between parts—that endlessly troublesome source of leaks, of buckling, of corrosion, of discoloration—was not merely *not* covered up and done away with as best as possible; it was intricately articulated, interminably expressed, volubly discussed by the critics, and masochistically celebrated. It was, quite simply, modern architecture's most vulnerable Achilles' heel.

Almost every system of prefabrication advanced in the United States during the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s (and most of those advanced to the present day) was a panel system, designed to simplify, speed up, and to reduce the cost of the building shell. Every one of these systems seemed to employ its own kind of joint. Many of these systems also subscribed to some special, carefully rationalized modular dimension—though most of them, admittedly, bowed to a four-inch module, which, amusingly enough, happens to be the module of one of the few truly prefabricated items in U.S. building today (and for centuries before): the brick.

Alas, very few of these systems recognized one essential fact about American building in the twentieth century, and that is that the shell of any building may be the least expensive item in the total cost of construction. So the prefabrication of the shell—which may not account for more than 20

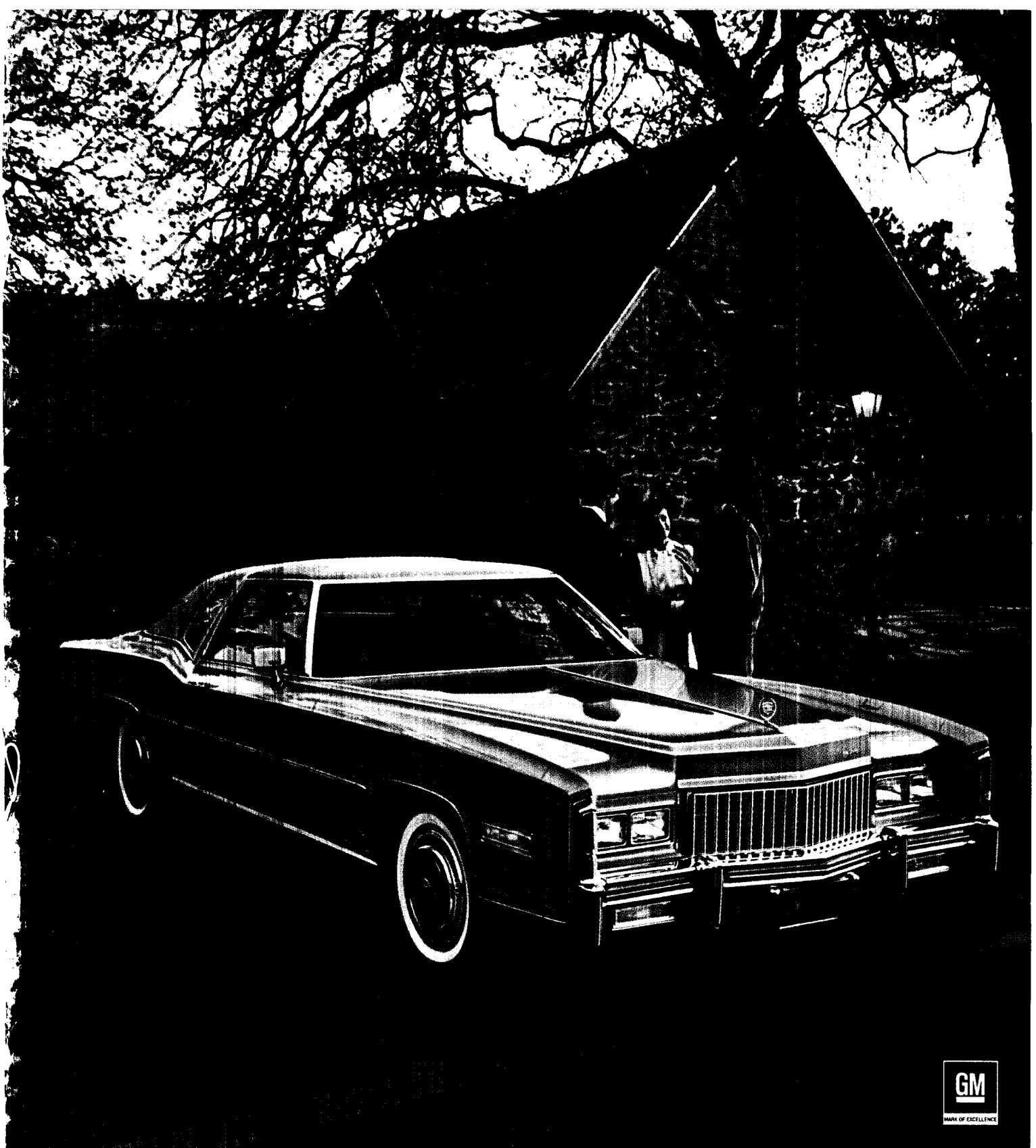
percent of the total cost of many a building, and probably accounts for less—will, under the very best of circumstances, save you less than a tiny fraction of one year's interest due on the building's mortgage. In short, the whole endlessly meticulous, beautifully reasoned, and exquisitely detailed system of panelized construction may not justify itself in any terms other than advancing its designer's progress toward his chosen heaven. Much more might have been done to reduce the outrageous cost of building if architects had devoted themselves to helping enact legislation that would outlaw untrammelled speculation with the price of land, or to helping construct financing arrangements that would not bleed a homeowner (or a tenant) for the benefit of a mortgage bank.

Prefabrication, as advocated in the United States over the past thirty or forty years, is a delightful intellectual exercise without much relationship to the manner in which American buildings are in fact made. Still, no one can reject the basic premise: building must be mass-produced, so as to keep up with our needs. The argument is over how this is to be accomplished.

In 1973, in Walt Disney World, near Orlando, Florida, the U.S. Steel Corporation erected a highly sophisticated prefabrication plant. This plant turned out some 1500 hotel-room modules in record time—steel-framed, flawlessly finished inside and out, completely wired, plumbed, and equipped with heating and air-conditioning ducts. The sleek modules measured about fifteen feet wide, nine feet tall, and forty feet long. They were manufactured under optimum, controlled conditions within that U.S. Steel factory; then they were lifted onto flatbed trucks and wheeled to the sites of two large hotels on the edges of a lovely artificial lake in the center of Walt Disney World. No prefabrication effort had ever produced a better-engineered module; by comparison, Montreal's Habitat seemed almost like the work of a caveman. The lighting within the hotel-room modules even included fixtures, on dimmers, that could exude artificial moonlight; and much of the hotel-room furniture (as well as all bathroom fixtures) had been built in inside the prefabbing plant.

Eventually two hotels were built, using these giant "building blocks"; after that, the plant was dismantled and a third hotel was constructed, using entirely conventional building materials and building methods.

The reason for this apparently regressive move was simple: the conventionally built hotel turned out to cost about 30 percent less per square foot than the prefabricated ones. Yet, for any layman, it was impossible to tell the difference between the two sets of hotel-room units; if anything, the conventionally built hotel was more spacious in its ac-



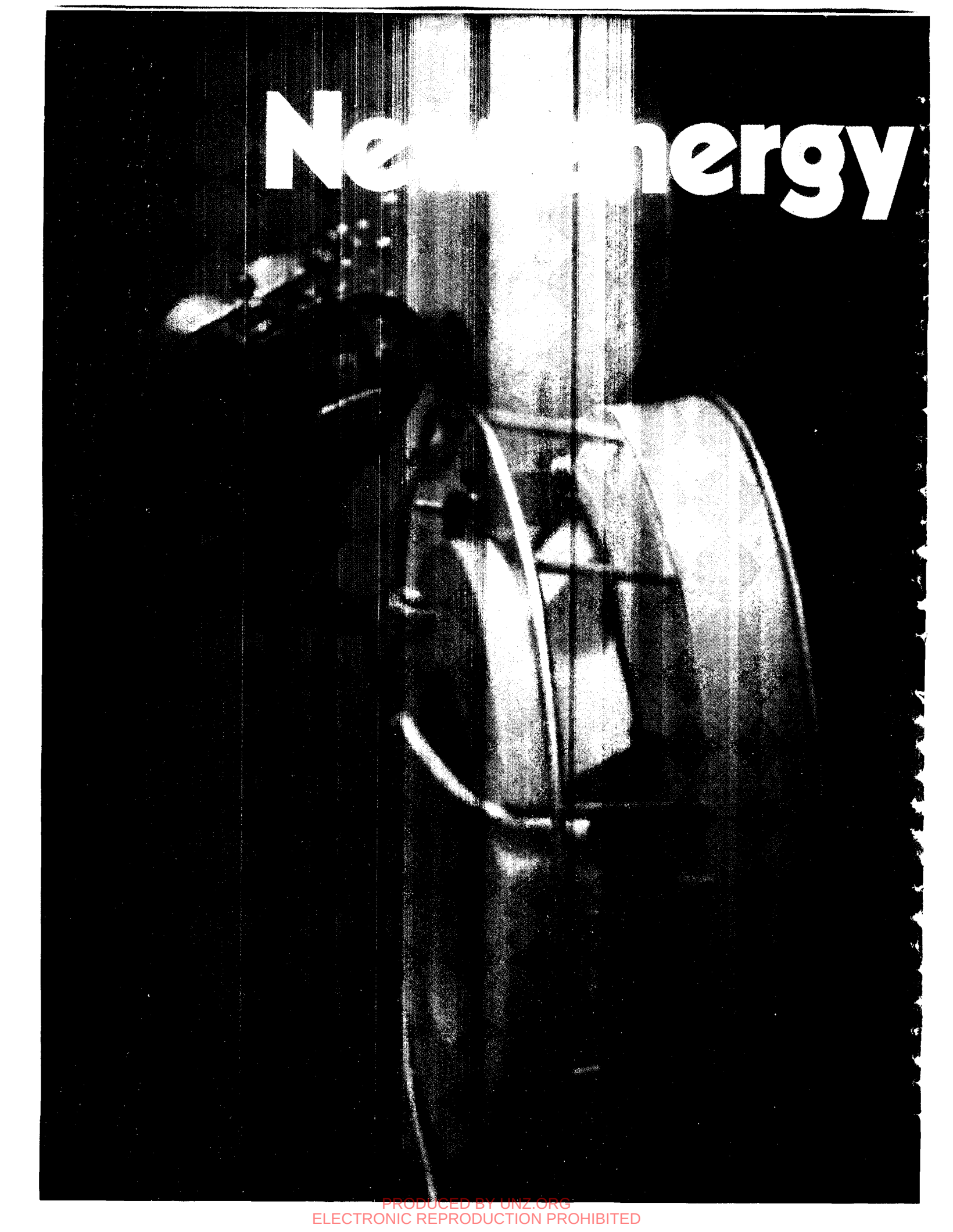
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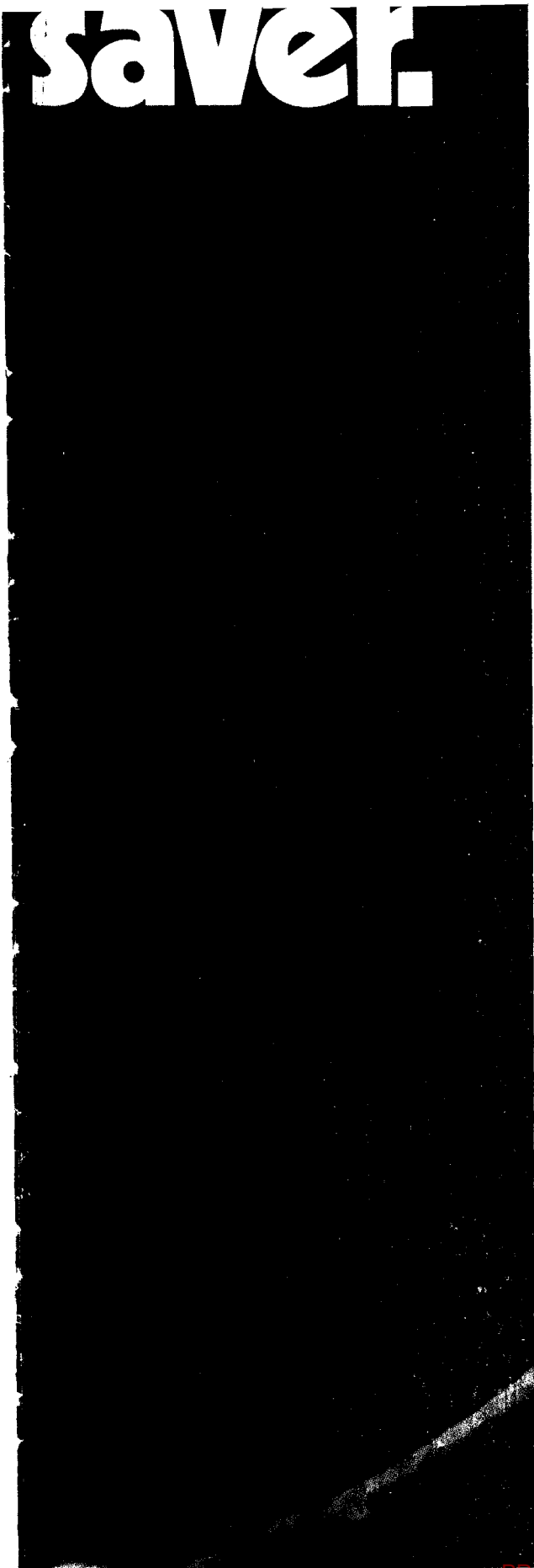


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commodations, though it did not offer artificial moonlight on dimmers.

What had happened was this: the hotel-room modules prefabricated in that U.S. Steel factory were trucked to the building site where they then waited until the building's structural and mechanical framework was ready to accept them. While waiting, the modules were exposed to weather (which wrecked some of the beautiful finishes and twisted some of the neat dimensional tolerances) and to vandalism. So when the time came to plug these modules into their respective building frames, so much remedial, on-site work had to be done that the initial savings were wiped out.

In the real world of building, some fascinating innovations have taken place that have generally escaped the notice of theoreticians. Not only have practical builders constructed impressive buildings under temporary, man-made inflatables; but practical engineers have created structures of the size of New York's Seagram Building off-site, then wheeled them into position, and plugged them into their infrastructures of services. Where? Well, for example, at Cape Kennedy, where huge gantries, the size of forty-story skyscrapers, complete with elevators, stairs, plug-in (and prefabbed) workshops, utility lines, and much more, are regularly assembled off-site and then rolled into position at a speed of four miles per hour, plugged into prepared utilities and services, and made ready for action. Is it inconceivable that our skyscrapers might be similarly prefabricated and moved, *in one piece*, into place—instead of disrupting whole sections of our cities, constantly, during their two- or three-year construction cycles?

In the real world, also, engineers have built entire cities, complete with factories, housing, power plants, offices, streets, even heliports—all prefabricated onshore in Louisiana and elsewhere, and then floated or helicoptered out, in large sections, to "sites" in the Gulf of Mexico, to form waterborne mining towns ten or more miles offshore. No elaborate theories of prefabrication or urban design were considered; these "New Towns" were designed and built ad hoc, by people who had gained most of their experience not through theorizing, but through building.

And that, unhappily, is the crux of the matter. Most schools of architecture, the world over, are staffed by people who teach the art and science of building but fail to show how to lay a course of bricks, or how to frame so much as a doghouse.

That, surely, is one reason for the present alienation between those who design and those who build. Very few of the certified Masters of Modern Architecture received their training at the academies: Mies van der Rohe started as a mason; Le Corbusier's incisive vision was shaped by the discipline of traditional watchmaking in Switzerland;

Marcel Breuer taught himself in a carpentry shop at the Bauhaus—and moved on to other crafts, like pipe-bending and stone masonry, before he concerned himself with what he called that "one percent, which is Art"; and Frank Lloyd Wright studied the wonderful ways in which nature constructed its complex organisms, and emerged from those studies as a great architect capable of great building. But most teachers of architecture today do not know how to build. And most prefabricators of buildings—in the United States and elsewhere—seem to be hoisted on their own preconceptions, or the preconceptions to which the modern movement has subscribed from its beginnings: that industrialization and prefabrication are the wave of the future.

It is quite possible that the exact opposite is true. Last April, the population of the globe reached the four billion mark, which means, among other things, that building and other industries are becoming increasingly *labor-intensive*. It seems quite likely that the wave of the future, in building, will be to turn away from expensive and problematical systems of prefabrication, and to entrust the job to those billions of available hands, laying even greater billions of bricks and blocks, or framing billions of feet of joists and studs—especially in the underdeveloped or developing countries. Not long ago, the extraordinary young Indian architect B. V. Doshi, who had been schooled by such modern masters as Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn, told me that the only promising way of meeting the horrendous housing shortages in his own country was to go back to building with mud—and with bricks made of mud and straw, and with sticks. For one thing, those materials cost no petrodollars; for another, India (and the rest of the world) had plenty of available and willing hands. Doshi was probably right; in any event, the dazzling promise of modern building technology had failed India as it has failed many of the rest of us.

And if Doshi is indeed right (as many of us believe), then a severe blow has been struck to the basic theories that have propped up the modern movement from its inception: gone, suddenly, is the cult of industrialization—with its dreams of precision-building and standardization; gone, too, is Gropius' amusing notion of throw-away "Kleenex architecture"—the idea that buildings might become as disposable or as mobile as cars; and gone, too, is Le Corbusier's dream of a vertical, radiant city—because such a city cannot be built with bricks and sticks and billions of semi-skilled hands.

For the modern movement, from Breuer's tubular steel chairs to Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse*, has this one, essential, common root: the root of assembly-line technology—applied, at long last, to this funky business of building. If that root is cut off, all else may fail. □

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G-MEN: 1975 STYLE

by Sanford J. Ungar

The brotherhood of FBI agents—like the Bureau they serve—is powerful. Who are these men who sometimes think of themselves as “the ultimate cops”? What makes them tick?

For John Bassett, the FBI is something of a dream come true, the victory of his ambition and ability over his adventurousness and aimlessness. A high school dropout in Burlington, Vermont, he began boxing professionally under the name of “Sparky Bassett” at age fifteen, well below the legal limit, and then went off to spend two years in the Coast Guard. By 1946 he was in New York City, appearing in fights at Madison Square Garden and Yankee Stadium, among other places, but a close friend, a regional official with the Veterans Administration, pleaded with him to get out of the boxing world and into something more respectable. He took Bassett to lunch with the president of Seton Hall University in New Jersey. One thing led to another, and because he had completed high school equivalency courses at the University of Vermont, Bassett was immediately admitted to Seton Hall as a college student. For four years, he attended classes by day and had a job as a policeman in East Orange, New Jersey, from midnight until 8 A.M.

Working as a cop in those days, one tended to meet FBI agents, and when Bassett graduated from Seton Hall in 1954, a friend in the Bureau encouraged him to apply; it was a period when police experience was being accepted as an especially relevant qualification for becoming an agent.

Imagining the New York fight managers and other characters who might be interviewed during his background investigation, Bassett never expected to be chosen; but he was, and, he says unabashedly today, “It was wonderful.” Assigned to Buffalo and Charlotte, he quickly became something of a Bureau legend—a guy who might take off in the wrong direction after a bank robber, but invariably would come up with his man. In Chicago since 1961, he has served as a sort of Man Friday, a facilitator and arranger, for one special-agent-in-charge after another. He is the perfect greeter and guide for visiting Bureau personnel, and a natural investigator on organized crime cases to boot.

Bassett spent his twentieth anniversary at the FBI training academy in Quantico, where he served as a “counselor” to a group of fifty policemen.

* * *

Tony Christy, a casual man with a degree in finance from Ohio State University, was quite content with his job as an auditor at the Mead Corporation in Dayton. In fact, he was about to be promoted in 1970 when his mind began to wander.

One Sunday night he and his wife were watching an episode of *The FBI*, a television series with Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. He thought it was silly and glossy and probably unrealistic, but still he wondered, What would it be like? Christy had no background in law enforcement nor any prior inclination toward it, but somehow at that moment the idea of the FBI struck his fancy. “So why don’t you find out about it and apply?” his wife suggested. “Just as a lark,” he insists, he dropped in at the Dayton resident agency later that week and filled out some forms. Before long, he had a phone

call on a Saturday night, asking him to report to the Cincinnati field office the next morning—Sunday—for an interview. The Bureau had an appropriation to hire a thousand new agents and the push was on. The Christys drove to Cincinnati as requested, and Cheryl Christy sat freezing in the parking lot for what seemed like hours while Tony was being grilled upstairs. By the time he was finished, he was even more intrigued by the idea. Very soon thereafter, he had a telegram offering him the new job and giving him a date to report to Quantico. He never even hesitated.

Christy bought five white shirts for training, because he had none; he hasn't worn them since, finding them unnecessary in the Atlanta, New York, and Jackson field offices, except during occasional court appearances on behalf of the Bureau.

* * *

After seven years as a member of the New York City Police Department, J. P. Morgan, the son of a New York police detective, recalls, "I had to make a decision whether to go corrupt." One choice, made by some of his colleagues, would have been to accept payoffs and get into crooked operations which could have raised his annual unofficial income to about \$200,000; another was to "go straight." "In the back of my mind," says Morgan, "I guess I always wanted to be an FBI agent. That seemed like the ultimate in cops. But I felt it was out of my reach, and I was always told, 'If the FBI wants you, they'll come look for you.'"

Despite the fact that at thirty-two he was older than the average applicant (and color-blind), and had a couple of police-brutality complaints pending against him, Morgan was accepted in 1964. He took a cut in pay, and he and his wife moved out of their recently purchased "dream house" because he was sent by the Bureau to the Charlotte, North Carolina, field office. "It was the greatest thing that ever happened to me," he now feels; "I had thought the world ended at the other side of the George Washington Bridge. It was wonderful to get a chance to travel. A whole new world opened up to me." On Morgan's first case, a man he was attempting to arrest told him, "I used to eat guys like you for breakfast," and physically attacked him, a situation that required the summoning of reinforcements from the field office. But it was all uphill from there—single-handed capture of a Most Wanted fugitive; work in important civil rights cases elsewhere in the South; six months at the Navy Language School in Monterey, California; assignment to Miami; and then transfer to head-

quarters to help establish a "management unit" in the Training Division. But although Morgan had intended to make the Bureau a career, he was lured away in 1969 by the offer of a professorship at the University of Georgia, "an opportunity to preach what I had been practicing." Later he served as police chief of St. Petersburg, Florida, and as a consultant for The Police Foundation. His was a short Bureau career, but one that opened great new vistas to him.

* * *

"I don't want to sound corny," says Esteban Uriarte when asked how he happened to become an FBI agent, "but I wanted to pay this country back." The United States, as he puts it, "opened its arms to me" in 1960, when he left Cuba with only the clothes on his back and five dollars in his pocket. His parents, who had left Spain for Cuba in the 1930s during the Civil War, followed him to the United States three years later. Eventually, through refugee aid programs, he attended Louisiana State University, graduating with an accounting degree in 1972.

But in 1971, as soon as he became an American citizen, Uriarte had applied to the Bureau for employment. Shifting uncomfortably as he talks, he explains, "I saw what went on in Cuba—the shooting and all that. You couldn't go to church or a movie without a bomb going off. . . . I saw the need for law enforcement, and the FBI is the strongest law enforcement organization in the country. I wanted to do something to help this country defend itself, and the FBI seemed the best way to do that." When he first got his degree, there was a freeze on the hiring of new agents; but with his skills in accounting and in the Bureau's most-needed language, Spanish, not to mention his resentment toward the Castro regime in Cuba, Uriarte was a natural, and in May, 1973, he got a letter inviting him to training. After breaking in on general criminal cases, he was quickly shifted to a squad where his accounting knowledge would be helpful—but he was also used for surveillance work on other cases, since his Latin look distinguished him from the usual FBI agent.

"The more I get into it," he said after a few months in the field, "it's incredible how much crime there is . . . and how the public doesn't know what's going on. So much money is taken from the public; you could work twenty-four hours a day and never get through."

The winner of the Heisman Trophy for the best college football player of 1973, John Cappelletti of Penn State University, interviewed by sportswriters in his moment of glory, was asked about his career plans. Without hesitation, he replied that what he would most like to do

Sanford J. Ungar, *The Atlantic's* Washington editor, is the author of the forthcoming *FBI*, from which this article is drawn. Another portion of the book, "The FBI File: Men and Machinations in the Court of J. Edgar Hoover," appeared in the April *Atlantic*.

eventually was to become a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is difficult to calculate the reinforcing effect that may have had on tens of thousands of grammar school and high school students who already thought that football players and FBI agents were two of the best things in the world that one could ever be. But it must have been very gratifying indeed to the 8600 FBI agents to know that even as they were going through some of the most difficult times in the agency's history, their job was still one aspired to by people who played other glamorous roles. For it is often the matter of image that has recruited men into the FBI—and has kept them there. As one agent in Los Angeles put it, "I never really knew what it was like to be on top of the heap until I came into the FBI."

In practical terms, "the top of the heap" has usually meant that doors open which would not

"I never really knew what it was like to be on top of the heap until I came into the FBI."

open to others, that one is respected in the community and among one's peers, and that daily life has an overlay of theoretical, if not actual, excitement and romance to it.

For some agents, life is very exciting indeed, as they go about solving bank robberies, kidnappings, and dramatic extortion cases, or pursuing organized-crime families or foreign spies operating in this country; those assigned to the best squads in the busiest field offices say they would not trade their job for any other. But for many, the daily routine is banal—running down stolen cars that have been taken across state lines, keeping humdrum track of organizations presumed to threaten the nation's security, or pounding the pavement to do background investigations of applicants for FBI jobs and potential appointees to high federal positions.

Initially, the image of importance and glamour was sustained in large part by the general esteem in which the late J. Edgar Hoover was held; it seemed to rub off on the men who worked for him. "I felt when I came in the Bureau that Mr. Hoover had hired me," said the Los Angeles agent; "I felt proud to be one of his men." Hoover was such an important part of the image that many agents displayed a portrait of the Director on the wall in their homes. (A few still do.) After some years, however, the image and the pride began to sustain themselves.

It is demonstrably true that FBI agents probably are of a higher caliber than anyone else in American law enforcement, but not exactly in the way that many people think. For years the Bureau basked in the myth that every agent is either a

fully trained lawyer or an accountant; the Bureau did not actually state unequivocally that this was the case, but it allowed, even led, people to believe it. In fact, that has never been so. During Hoover's first years in charge of the Bureau, he tended to hire lawyers (less on the basis of any abstract principle, it seems, than on the fact that he himself had a law degree) until the percentage of agents with legal training had dramatically increased. There was also a corps of accountants, who were considered to be in a category apart from the other agents and who worked only on cases requiring their special skills; as the number of those cases increased, more accountants were recruited.

Before very long, however, the Director saw that it was neither necessary nor desirable to insist that every agent hired be a lawyer or an accountant. Gradually, other qualifications were substituted: college graduates "with a major in a physical

science for which the Bureau has a current need," "with fluency in a language for which the Bureau has a current need," or with "three years of professional, executive,

complex investigative or other specialized experience." That meant that while lawyers and accountants were still welcome, and in some periods given preference, there was also room for high school teachers and coaches, military veterans (especially Marines), policemen, stockbrokers, insurance men, bank officers, geologists, journalists, and, of course, Bureau clerks. The official circular on agent jobs also points out that "the FBI reserves the right to waive a qualification not bearing on character and integrity when found necessary to obtain an employee with demonstrated ability in some particular skill that is unique or unusual, and for which a need exists." In other words, the rules leave room enough for the Bureau to take anyone it wants, and without the constraints and regulations of the Civil Service Commission. Today, in fact, only 14 percent of the agents are lawyers and 8 percent accountants. About 23 percent of the agents are former FBI clerks, and 64 percent are former members of the military who qualify for veterans' preference.

Most of the other qualifications are standard—good vision and hearing and an otherwise "excellent physical condition," as well as a driver's license. For more than thirty years, applicants had to be at least five feet seven inches tall, but the height restriction was abolished last June—in part because it was thought to discriminate against the women newly competing for agent positions.

The college degree requirement and the age restriction—now twenty-three to thirty-six at the time of application—have assured that FBI standards remain much higher than those of most police de-

partments and other law enforcement agencies; many agents enter the Bureau with master's degrees or even doctorates (or work on them nights and weekends while on duty). Just completing the application for Bureau employment requires a certain level of stamina and literacy. It is an exhaustive ten-page form, with spaces for biographical details of "wives (including maiden names) and husbands of brothers and sisters," of "brothers and sisters of your husband or wife" and "name and present location of ex-spouse." (Divorce is not a disqualification, as is, say, homosexuality.) The application becomes the basis for an extensive field investigation of every prospective agent, which theoretically weeds out anyone of questionable background, character, or "loyalty." The Bureau refuses to make a sample of its written examination available for any outside inspection, but insists that it is a rigorous test of aptitude, judgment, and legal-style reasoning.

Another characteristic that puts the FBI well above most other police and law enforcement agencies, not to say government agencies in general, is the absence of large-scale corruption among agents. The contacts and connections of FBI officials have often brought them favors and special considerations, but there are remarkably few documented instances of agents accepting payoffs or kickbacks, making personal use of evidence seized in connection with cases, or peddling their influence—practices that are notoriously common among many local and state police forces. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, Bureau of Customs, and federal narcotics enforcement agencies, for example, have all been hit by well-publicized scandals concerning the financial improprieties of their field personnel. But colleagues consider FBI agents straight arrows by comparison. And despite some investigative abuses, under the counterintelligence programs ("COINTELPRO"), of recent notoriety and on the initiative of individual agents, the Bureau has not often been tainted by such illegal and abusive tactics as those associated with agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration—knocking down doors in midnight raids on the wrong house, selling hard drugs themselves on the side, and the like.

The FBI also profits from its reputation for continuity. Bureau agents tend to stay in their jobs longer than most, and the turnover figures are astonishingly low. The unofficial agreement is that any person graduated from agent's training will remain with the Bureau a minimum of three years, but in practice agents tend to stay longer than that—sixteen years and three months is the average. Once an agent passes the three-year mark, the odds are that he will last for twenty years or more, and then retire with a very attractive pension. The transfer policy and other bureaucratic factors, however, sometimes interfere with continuity, and indi-

vidual citizens may be approached by different FBI officials on the same case from one period of time to another. But the routine paperwork and standardization of style which are so annoying to some Bureau people assure that one agent can usually pick up where another has left off.

Who are these agents who present themselves as being so proud and sure of themselves, the self-styled elite of law enforcement? The Bureau insists that it does not compile and computerize official biographical statistics, but an unscientific composite profile is relatively easy to construct on the basis of observation of, and conversation with, a substantial number of agents. They are overwhelmingly white males of an average age somewhat older these days than the Bureau would like to acknowledge for what is called a "young man's profession." In Bureau ranks there is a high representation of Catholics, especially of Irish origin, many of whom attended church-run or -supported colleges and universities, oftentimes in the northeastern part of the United States. (If the CIA prototype is a Yale man, his FBI counterpart likely went to Fordham or Notre Dame.) They tend to be churchgoers, but not to live overly restrained personal and social lives. (A striking number have relatives in the clergy, and there is irony in the fact that some of those relatives showed up on the other side of cases involving radical protesters during the Vietnam War.) Most are married and have children; if they are not married when they enter the Bureau, the chances are good that they will meet and marry an FBI stenographer or other clerical employee. They are robust, but not as rough-and-tumble as the 1930s "gangbusters" types. Quick-tempered, they can be rather easily provoked into arguments. They usually want to be assigned as close to their hometown as possible. They are rarely wealthy, and they are solidly planted in the middle class. Quite a few agents are the sons of policemen, and they see their career decision as a natural progression, a step upward that is still in the same great tradition of law enforcement.

Interestingly, there is a subtle, residual bias within the Bureau itself against agents who are former policemen. It is sometimes suggested that these ex-cops slipped in while the standards were lowered to expand the agent force; and former policemen rarely make it into the highest-ranking Bureau positions. (The former policemen, for their own part, can point to their ability to defend themselves physically better than most.)

The Bureau has always prided itself on good geographical distribution, drawing agents from every section of the country and, in keeping with a Hoover policy dating back to 1924, generally sending them to another area for their first assign-

ments. But one striking aspect of the average field office for many years was the number of agents who originally came from small towns. The reasons have long been the subject of speculation. Is it because small-town boys are less cynical and more idealistic about the notion of government service, or that the image of policemen has been held in more awe in small communities than in big cities, or just that background checks on agent applicants are less likely to turn up derogatory information or other problems if the person has spent most of his life in sparsely populated, clean-living areas? Whatever the reasons, the effect, especially among old-timers in the FBI, was to carry over small-town values and principles to the Bureau. That meant an uncommon degree of openness and friendliness, but also a sense of horror about what goes on in the big cities where most of these agents ended up working. Younger agents have complained that the small-town mentality in the FBI also led to a certain narrow-mindedness and intolerance. The small-town influence seems to have diminished considerably in recent years.

For a long time there were very few Jewish agents or members of other minority ethnic groups, and only a smattering of American Indians or Spanish-surnamed agents. The only blacks were people dubbed "honorary agents," whose real assignments were to be personal servants, retainers, chauffeurs, or office boys to the Director, and of course there were no women agents at all. L. Patrick Gray III, as soon as he became acting director of the FBI in May, 1972, lifted the ban on women agents. Today there are thirty-one women assigned to field offices.

Part of the reason for this uniformity of race and background was the personal prejudices of J. Edgar Hoover and his associate director, Clyde Tolson. They wanted to be surrounded by average, all-American types. In fact there were Jews among the men who worked closely at Hoover's side over the years, including Harold "Pop" Nathan in the 1920s and 1930s, and Alex Rosen from World War II until the Director's death, but it was always assumed that law enforcement was not a very popular profession or a status career choice among Jews. One former agent, who worked on a security squad in New York, recalls that Jews were not expected to be particular friends of the FBI, and that one way to list somebody—and in the process, manage to skip interviewing him—was to describe him with the telling epithet, "a Jewish academician of known liberal persuasion." But the paucity of Jewish agents also meant that there were few people considered eligible, for example, to conduct investigations among Orthodox Jewish communities in Brooklyn or, in the summertime, at the Catskill mountain resorts of upstate New York.

Similarly, the Bureau had very few agents it

could confidently send into Mexican-American or Puerto Rican communities, onto Indian reservations, or into black ghettos, so it often had to rely on informant coverage or help from the police, who were themselves sometimes not very welcome in those communities.

There is little question that Hoover simply had an old-fashioned, narrow-minded, southern attitude toward blacks. When Robert Kennedy became Attorney General in 1961, and declared that every branch of the Justice Department, including the FBI, would have to increase its minority recruiting and hiring, the Director made an enormous fuss over the fact that he was not going to "lower standards" just to integrate the Bureau. It turned out that the FBI, like so many other employers, did not have to lower its standards, but had to develop some new recruiting techniques and make blacks feel they would have an equal shot at advancement in the Bureau. When Hoover yielded, he did so slowly and painfully. Fifteen years later, after other black recruiting pushes and establishment of an equal employment opportunity office within the Administrative Division, there are only about a hundred black FBI agents out of the total 8600, and a mere handful of them are in supervisory positions. One problem, according to Bureau officials, is that there is a higher turnover among black agents than among agents in general; once trained by the Bureau, they are inevitably offered other, perhaps better-paying, jobs with private industry, and some leave to take those jobs. As for Chicanos, of whom there are also very few in the Bureau, FBI officials have recently been heard on Capitol Hill to offer their own pop-sociological explanation: "They don't like to leave their families or take the chance of being sent far away from home."

Once in the Bureau, black agents, because they are so few in number, tend to get particularly exciting assignments, the closest thing to the flying-squad image of fictionalized television programs. They were urgently rushed in, for example, to work on the recent murder cases in the Virgin Islands, and have been similarly deployed when and where their skin color would be an obvious investigative advantage. "I have already had experiences," says one black agent after five years of service, "that some guys don't get in twenty years." Another young black agent confirms that his role poses special problems because he tends to have somewhat different values from his fellow agents, but also to be regarded with suspicion in the black community. "The kid on the street only reads about the Bureau's harassment of the Black Panther party. He's forgotten about Selma [Alabama] and the Bureau's role in protecting the right of blacks to vote." Most blacks in the FBI are opposed, but thus far quietly, to the Bureau's easy tendency to label black people "extremists" and in-



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investigate them indiscriminately; they suggest that when their representation in the Bureau ranks is greater, as inevitably it must become, and there are blacks in special-agent-in-charge and assistant-special-agent-in-charge positions, these hangovers from the past will change dramatically.

The FBI's overall minority-hiring record compares favorably with that of many other federal agencies, but relatively few of the minority employees hold the prestigious position of agent. The latest Bureau statistics show 104 black agents, 107 with "Spanish surnames," nineteen "Asian-Americans," and thirteen American Indians.

The world view of agents generally includes a heavy component of political conservatism. Most agents, for reasons of family background and tradition, are registered Democrats, but are inclined to believe that the Democratic party has gone off the deep end of radicalism. Above all, they feel a tremendous world-weariness, which leads them to distrust many people with whom they have contact, especially politicians and newsmen.

Not every agent shares these views on his arrival in the Bureau, but the organization has a powerful conservative influence on new recruits. Although the FBI today is officially a nonpolitical agency, one relatively new agent says he was surprised to find that "everybody feels obligated to take a stand on every political issue, and after a while you realize that this is a right-of-center organization." Another young agent speculates that much of the conservative mind-set derives from the law-and-order issue and the Bureau's constant frustration with the courts. "I can't stand seeing these bad guys released from prison," he says mournfully; "I haven't yet seen people turn around and follow the straight and narrow path. . . . I'm twenty-eight years old, but I feel forty-eight sometimes. I get very upset and cannot sleep some nights. At the expense of the taxpayers, agents are risking their lives to capture people, and then those people are just turned out on the streets again." But increasingly, one agent posted in the South claims, young recruits are taking the chance of expressing more liberal, progressive attitudes in conversation with their older colleagues—especially on issues like the environment, defense spending, and tax laws. They remain distinctly minority viewpoints, however.

The life-style of FBI agents is usually in keeping with their image as solid citizens. They tend to buy their own homes, preferably in the distant, newly developed suburbs, and to send their children to public or parochial schools. Except in cities like Miami, where the norm is different, they generally

dress conservatively, notwithstanding the repeal of Hoover's old white-shirt-and-black-shoes rules. Their hair is still relatively short, and anyone who starts growing a moustache will likely be teased as a "hippie" for a while before he is ultimately accepted. There are only a few rebels here, who, in contrast to the many in the military, feel tempted to make themselves test cases by growing beards. (It remains the official Bureau view that a beard and other manifestations of nonconformity are outside the average citizen's reasonable expectations of an FBI agent. But it is not absolutely forbidden, and there are probably about a dozen bearded agents these days—in many cases because of special undercover assignments.)

External characteristics are also often important to agents in their judgments of others, including those they investigate. One agent who worked on the investigation of the National Guardsmen who fired into a crowd and killed four students during the May, 1970, antiwar demonstrations at Kent State University in Ohio acknowledged frankly that "what those kids looked like" and their obscene gestures at the Guardsmen had affected his ability to feel sympathy for them.

Agents have a strong yearning for normality and stability, and one young agent says that he would not under any circumstances want to work with a colleague who had been seeing a psychiatrist. "I could never be sure whether I could rely on him," he says. It was scandalous enough when an agent assigned to the Louisville field office committed

Most agents feel a tremendous world-weariness, which leads them to distrust many people with whom they have contact, especially politicians and newsmen.

suicide, but considered even more so when it was learned that he had been seeing a psychiatrist without the Bureau's knowledge.

Virtually every FBI agent can cite the exact date when he entered on duty: it was a major event which meant important changes in his routine and perhaps even in his personality. It made him part of an organization that is sustained on an extraordinarily high level of spirit and enthusiasm. It is a while before full membership in this brotherhood takes effect. An agent must make an arrest or otherwise prove his mettle on the firing line before he is accepted as an equal by his immediate peers and colleagues. And traditionally, as long as he is still in his first office assignment, he is regarded as an apprentice; by the irrational, unofficial rules of the game, an agent who has been in the Bureau only seven months but is in his second office might be trusted with more indepen-

dent responsibility than one who has been on duty twice as long but is still in his first office assignment. Two first-office agents, in fact, are not supposed to make an arrest together.*

Once an agent has been through initiation, his job will invariably give him a profound feeling of security, in more than the ordinary sense. The FBI is unique in the extent to which agents, particularly in the field, will bail each other out of crises. If an agent is ill but has used up all of his sick leave, it is standard procedure for his colleagues to chip in and make up his paycheck every week; if

If the CIA prototype is a Yale man, his FBI counterpart likely went to Fordham or Notre Dame.

his wife or other family members have problems, or if he otherwise falls into a desperate financial situation, the same thing will be done. The widow of an agent who dies suddenly, on or off duty, can count on unofficial help of every sort as long as she wants it. In the midst of disasters, colleagues are always available to help. When the resident agent in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, was a victim of the floods caused by Hurricane Agnes in the summer of 1972, for example, a whole crew from the Philadelphia field office, to which he reports, spent a weekend helping him dig out.

But let an agent renounce the Bureau or otherwise defy the unwritten code of conduct, and his colleagues may immediately turn against him. When the chips are down and the lines of battle drawn, the instinct is to defend the Bureau as an institution against all attackers, even from within. Disenchanted former agents may have been saying publicly nothing more extreme than what hundreds of agents had said privately for years, but the fact of their saying it publicly and becoming "enemies" of the FBI disqualifies them entirely for support.

So strong is the pull and the security of the Bureau that some agents who leave eventually come back into the fold; with few exceptions, depending on the current needs of the Bureau at any given time, they are welcomed back in good standing. Those who leave under friendly circumstances remain profoundly loyal and reap considerable personal advantage. Their training and experience is thought to qualify them for employment with the security or public affairs divisions of major corporations or small businesses, as prosecutors or lawyers with a private criminal law practice, as police

* The policy of the new director, Clarence M. Kelley, to try to leave agents in their first assignment for an average of five years should have an interesting effect on these traditions.

chiefs in small town or big city, or even as candidates for public office in communities where they have been assigned as agents. Many of these former agents achieve powerful positions from which they are able to show their gratitude to the FBI, whether by surreptitiously providing information to agents, speaking on the Bureau's behalf in moments of controversy, or helping it gain subtle and sometimes undetected influence on the political scene. The relationship has dividends in the other direction, too. People who have left the Bureau are often able to call upon their former colleagues to check matters for them in FBI files and to do them other occasional favors. It is an exchange that goes on all the time.

Most former agents are united in a gigantic fraternity called the Society of Former Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Headquartered in New York, the organization serves primarily to facilitate contacts among former agents, and in mid-summer of 1975, 6387 of them were members. It publishes a confidential directory, so that people can readily locate old associates and find new ones with a common background who would be predisposed to help in an area of need. The organization has a monthly publication called *The Grapevine*, which consists largely of gossip about the Bureau and its alumni, and holds an annual convention, strictly off-limits to the press and the public. The director is always invited to address the annual meeting, and although Hoover stopped doing so in his last years, L. Patrick Gray III and Clarence Kelley after him seized upon the opportunity to cultivate an important source of support outside the government. The ex-agents' association sometimes serves as a powerful lobby for the Bureau's interests with both Congress and local governments.

Among the agent population of the FBI, there are several clearly definable generations of recruits who came in under circumstances that were different each from the others. Those circumstances often affect the way the agents do their work, view the Bureau's mission and its relationships with the outside world, and look toward the future. Not everyone fits into one of these groups, obviously, because the FBI is always hiring; but the generations correspond, for the most part, to particular waves during which the Bureau expanded.

One generation entered the FBI just as World War II was beginning and the Bureau had only recently been assigned by President Roosevelt to make a major effort to combat espionage and subversion. The war was a dominant influence in their

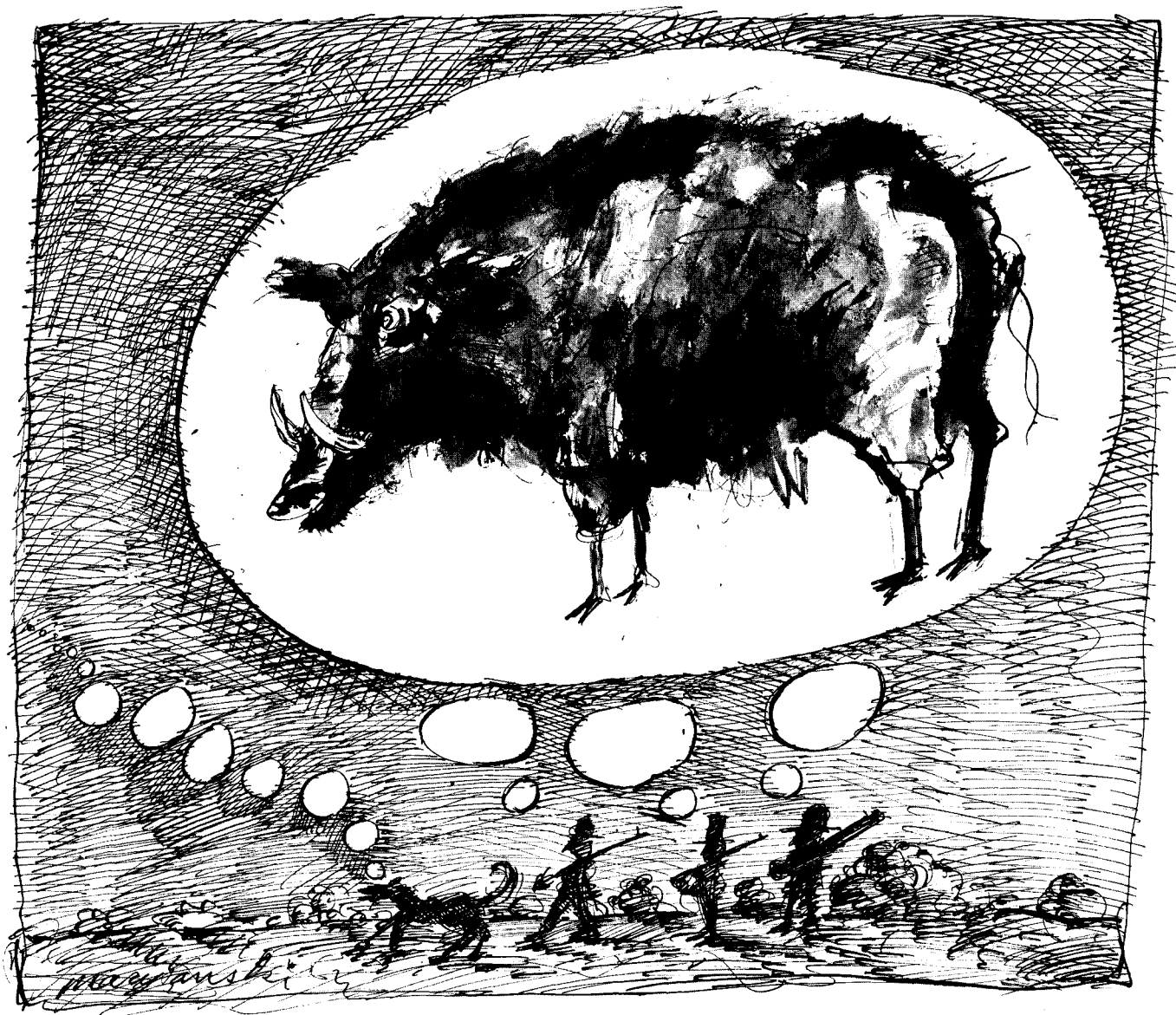
lives, and they saw the FBI as an extension of (in fact, it was an alternative to) military service; they considered it a privilege to be part of the war effort and to shape the Bureau to the needs of the time. Among the recruits of that era were Clarence Kelley, William C. Sullivan, Cartha ("Deke") DeLoach, and others who would later become important in Bureau history. To them, a war was a war, be it in Europe, Korea, or Vietnam, and one did not question national policy in such a time of emergency. But these men tended to have a more flexible sense than Hoover did of what the FBI should be doing, and they considered it only logical that such an institution should shift gears and change emphasis (to civil rights, organized crime, terrorism, or whatever) with the temper and the needs of the times; they saw that to do so enhanced the Bureau's importance in the life of the nation and in law enforcement circles. If Hoover had stepped aside ten years or so before he died, and if, at the peak of their careers, this generation had had an opportunity to shape the Bureau, it might have become an agency that was uniquely relevant and responsive to the changing times, if not greatly innovative about techniques.

Another group flocked into the Bureau as the Korean War broke out, heating up the Cold War. Hoover, by then taking the Bureau's "internal security" mandate very seriously, asked for and obtained substantial increases in the appropriations for hiring agents. The people who came in, for the most part, had served in World War II, and they perceived their country to be going down the drain in its aftermath. With the McCarthy Era in full swing, they were frightened by Soviet moves abroad and saw possible domestic parallels in the offing. They were sympathetic, and sometimes publicly so, with the witch-hunts of the senator from Wisconsin and the House Un-American Activities Committee. They were perhaps the most stridently and enduringly conservative people ever to enter the FBI. They did not merely believe in the importance of the Bureau's internal security work, they favored its considerable expansion. Many of them serve today as special-agents-in-charge or assistant directors, and in a relaxed moment they will pine for the good old days when the Bureau could call someone a "Commie" and not have to worry about the consequences. They are the most adoring of Hoover, unable usually even to joke about his foibles and mistakes, and especially wary of any significant changes within the FBI. Until more of them have retired—an event likely to occur by 1978 under the terms of a recently passed retirement bill—those changes cannot occur smoothly.

A third generation is made up of the children of the 1950s and 1960s, who came of age during a

period of great upheaval in American society, culture, and government. They too entered the FBI in wartime, during the latter stages of the conflict in Vietnam in the late 1960s and early 1970s; but that was a different kind of war, which had declining support among the people. This group includes one contingent known by some as "The Berrigan 1000," the extra agents specially authorized by Congress after Hoover's dramatic testimony in 1970 concerning the alleged "incipient plot" of Fathers Daniel and Philip Berrigan and other militant Catholic activists to kidnap government officials, blow up buildings, and throw Washington into havoc. According to the terms of the Director's request, they were to help the FBI in fighting organized crime, airplane hijackings, and the New Left. Under the circumstances of their hasty recruitment, one might have expected these new agents to be right-wing characters, yearning for the scalps of student demonstrators, and angry over the decline in public esteem for the Bureau. But whether by the force of history or by accident, what the FBI got was people who were especially free-thinking and who did not necessarily react to events on the basis of knee-jerk instincts. In contrast to the cozy Bureau the World War II generation of agents entered, these young people came into an impersonal and growing bureaucracy. They did not automatically seek involvement in security work, and indeed, some shunned it as outmoded and overdone; they were more interested in organized crime investigations and other areas of the FBI's criminal jurisdiction.

Most Bureau officials did not appear to realize it at first—in part because it is not their wont to find out what ordinary agents think—but this new breed of agents, even if they were military veterans, tended to see the Vietnam War in some perspective. Many of them were vaguely troubled by the idea of looking for Selective Service violators and deserters who were possibly of their own age and similar backgrounds. They were less dogmatic about some of the Bureau's political and social attitudes and less likely to overreact to the appearance of a liberal organization in an applicant investigation. Some, shock of all shocks, chose to let their hair grow longer even before L. Patrick Gray gave agents permission to do so, and tried to draw older colleagues out on the subject of why young people's hair and clothes should be matters of such emotional contention in the FBI, why "hippies" provoked such wrath and hate. There is always a chance that these agents, like other generations before them, will become crusty and narrow-minded with the passage of time, but they insist—still quietly—that if and when their time comes, they will help bring reform to the Bureau. □



STALKING THE WILD BOAR

by Page Stegner

Out of the Old West comes Part Two in The Adventures of the As Is Cattlemen's Association, or "This Little Piggy Never Made It to Market." As we join our hero, we hear him saying . . .

It is late in the afternoon. Once again I am sitting in Eamon Barrett's baronial kitchen, toasting my backside next to the fire and watching a cold California rain sweep across the ridge and into the canyon below the ranch house. It is mid-December. Christmas is approaching, and the kids are off in the living room trimming a tree under the direction of their mothers, while the male members of the As Is Cattlemen's Association work their way through several bottles of Leoville Lascases, 2nd cru, 1966, and gloomily regard a heavy overcast driven in off the sea by the south wind. The lower draws of the coastal range mountains fill with the storm; outriding fingers of mist seep up the canyons to meet the leaden sky that has settled into the pine and redwood forests of the higher country.

An inactive day. We are bored and restless. Our host's dog, a scrofulous anthology of respiratory ailments, clotted hair, and ill temper, comes into the room and peers through the thicket on his face at Ron Dunton's discarded boots, decides they are not edible, and leaves. "Why don't you do that

animal a favor, Barrett," somebody remarks, "and shoot it."

Barrett, snuggled deep into his Barcalounger, pulls the cork out of a bottle with his teeth and spits it into the fire. "I did," he says.

It is raining harder now, the wind gusting from thirty to forty knots and blowing holes in the cloud cover below us. I can see the floor of the canyon, periodically, and part way up the side toward the opposite ridge. Wisps of fog snag in the coyote bush and hang there for a moment, flapping.

Dunton gets up and pads to the window in his stocking feet and stands looking out at the storm. "I think we're in for a hell of a winter," he remarks. "I think it is going to be long and cold and wet."

"Well, you can kiss my cabbage patch goodbye," I say. "I knew I should have planted earlier."

Ron sucks air through his teeth. "You and Barrett ought to slaughter a couple of those scrawny steers of yours and forget the veggies until spring. Going to be too cold even for a winter garden." He scratches the small of his back and inspects a hole in the toe of his sweat sock. "If things get real tough on you boys, I've got a cellar full of rotten zucchini you can have cheap."

"Things keep on the way they are," I say, "and I'll take 'em. Property taxes on my place just went from twelve to eighteen hundred a year, and the IRS is auditing my income back to '73. I tell you, it's nothing but hard times and bum credit."

"Maybe we could do *you* a favor," Eamon begins.

"Don't bother. The larder gets any leaner and I'm moving to Bangladesh."

"Keep the faith," he says. "Believe in the fat of the land. It shall provide as it has always provided."

Oh, yes, the fat of the land. Like now that I have my own chickens, I pay a dollar a dozen for eggs. I raise my own beef at just under four dollars a pound. My garden provides me all the aphids, cutworms, sow bugs, leaf miners, earwigs, nematodes, red spiders, and root maggots I can eat . . . and Swiss chard, the only thing a gopher won't. Tell me about the rabbits, George. Tell me how it's gonna be.

Just before dark, as my wife is making noises from the other room about the lateness of the hour, I fill my glass one more time and go to the window for a last look at the dingy weather. There is, remarkably, some breakup, and it looks as if it might possibly clear. The canyon is no longer socked in, and I can see up toward its northern end, where two of the As Is Cattle Company steers (a herd of four when the county hasn't impounded

them for running loose on the public roads) are grazing contentedly on oat stubble and mud. But what catches my eye immediately thereafter is more interesting: four or five hulking animals, down the slope some two hundred yards and partially obscured by clumps of poison oak. They seem to be . . . rooting. "Eamon," I say, "you got any pigs on this place?"

"No pigs."

"Well, what do you suppose that *is* down there?"

He comes to the window, Ron following, and we stand watching whatever it is for a few moments, until one moves out into a clearing—not more than a dark shadow really, about the size of a large dog: the Hound of the Baskervilles, let us say—and Eamon mutters, "I'll be damned. I believe that is wild boar."

Wild boar? Is it possible? We look again, and then Ron is satisfied. "It is for sure. Russian blue, by God. See how slab-sided they are, with a long sloped back and extended snout?" I peer into the gathering dark and see that he is right, incredibly; they are big and black and hairy, and their tusks gleam dully in the fading light as they move slowly away from us toward the bottom of the canyon. "There is a fellow in Monterey who raises Russian blue for hunting," Ron remarks. "The strays are fair game." The IRS be damned, I think. They can't tax manna. I tell my wife to forget about going home right away. There are plans to be made.

Sus scrofa. Cloven-hoofed mammal of the family *Suidae*. Once common in the forests of Europe, and favorite game of the quality. First imported into this country around 1893 by a man named Austin Corbin, who released fifty boar on his land in New Hampshire, whence they spread themselves around New England. We pass this information around the dinner table as we sit down to eat the Barretts' dinner. Keen of sight, excellent hearing, grow to four hundred pounds.

A boar, I assure Eamon's youngest son, Perry, has the same impulses and instincts as an all-conference linebacker blitzing a quarterback—a metaphor that intrudes itself when I privately consider that the closest I have ever been to a razorback is the front end of a TV set during a Saturday afternoon football game. Ron, however, knows the beast firsthand. When he was a kid, his father and uncle hunted them in the Adirondacks, and he knows a couple of "good ol' boys" down in the Ozarks who track them with special hounds. The score over a season, he says, reads something like hogs 21, dogs 11. Which leads us, of course, into an extended debate over the virtues of various breeds in the hunting of big game—redbone, bluetick, black-and-tan.

Aaron Barrett grows tired of the sporting-club prattle. "I'd just like to know when you guys are

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going to quit jawing and get after these critters?"

"Well, now, your boar is mostly a nocturnal feeder," Ron cautions, "though you'll find him around in the early morning, too. I think our best bet is about an hour or so before sunup, when there is enough light to see but we don't run the risk of becoming the hunted."

"They wouldn't eat you," says Aaron. Doubting Thomas.

"Not you, anyway," Perry tells him. "*Nothing* could eat *that* much."

Eamon goes to his closet and drags out an old M-1, heavy as a truck axle and slightly rusty, but possibly in working order. He slides the bolt and snaps the trigger.

"You got cartridges for that?"

"With this you don't need cartridges. With this what you do is you corner your prey and throw rocks at it until it attacks, then you club it to death."

"I see. That way you run no risk of spoiling your meat, right? Whereas if you actually *shot* anything with it, you would have you some ticks and hair and a hole, but not a lot else."

"MEAT!" Eamon says. "Lord, just think about the meat, boys. The hams and the bacons, the ribs and loins. A veritable mountain of pork; sweet fat of the bountiful land; I *told* you something would turn up. The sausage, the chop . . ."

"The pickled pigs' feet," shouts infected Perry. "The liver and heart."

"*The cheese of the head,*" yells Aaron. "*All parts are edible.*"

Eamon regards them with a certain distaste. "Please cool it with the entrails persiflage. We are not buzzards; we are not set atwitter by carrion."

It remains only to set an hour to meet. Dunton will bring me a gun, he says, since I own nothing more formidable than a .22. The boys will accompany us, and Ron's girl, Terri, wants to come along. My wife and Wendy Barrett will have no part of the proceedings, and plan a trip to San Francisco to see a Bufano exhibit or the Brundage collection at the DeYoung, or to take tea in the gardens at Golden Gate Park. Thin blood. Frail stock. Not clear they intend to return.

In the morning there is just the faintest line of slate-pale light above the Salinas Valley when I leave the town of Santa Cruz and turn east into the foothills. Tule fog floats over the macadam, but the sky is full of stars, and in the rear-view mirror I can see a half-moon hanging over the rim of the Pacific. The road begins to climb, ducks into a tunnel of thick vegetation, dark and shapeless as the night, emerges again at the top of the ridge that leads to Eamon's house. Lights are burning in the kitchen when I drive up, and I am the last to arrive. Ron and Terri are drinking coffee. The kids are breakfasting on sweet rolls and

Koogle—some hideous homogenization of peanut butter and chocolate. Ron pours a slug of brandy in a cup and adds instant Sanka. "I thought I had another rifle," he says, handing me the hot water, "but I must have lent it to Comstock. I brought you this handgun instead." He lays the butt of an ugly little pistol in my hand, and I read Sentinel Mark III stamped into its business end. It is a .375 Magnum with a two-and-a-half-inch barrel and combat handles, and it is loaded with .270-gram, soft-point bullets that look as if they could stop a dump truck. "Might be a little heavy-duty," he admits, "but if we get any boar charging in on us, you'll be glad you have it." My only consolation is that I don't think, what with Eamon's M-1 and Ron's Harrington & Richardson carbine, 30-06, with a Mannlicher stock and mounted with a 4X Imperial, that I'm going to need it.

"Well," I say, putting down my empty cup, "looks like we might as well saddle up."

At the end of the ridge we split into two groups. Eamon takes his boys and crosses the canyon, signals us from the other side, and we work our way in tandem, descending slowly toward the creek at the edge of the property. No sign of the boar. We smoke a cigarette and consider their absence; decide that they have probably moved onto the adjoining land and that we'll likely find them along the bottom, where a stock road runs through a long narrow gully and out into an open meadow. It is still very dark in the canyon, and I am beginning to imagine a malevolent *Sus scrofa* out there in the brush, sharpening his razor tusks on a slab of granite and waiting impatiently for breakfast to blunder into his space. "Why don't I go back to the house and drive down along this road," I suggest. "You guys can herd the pigs this way; when they get into the narrows I'll run over them with the truck."

"Fan out the way we were before," Ron orders. "We'll try the same pattern. Eamon, you give us a signal when you get up the hill."

It is more than a mile before we see them. As I traverse the slope and climb over a fence with a NO TRESPASSING sign on it, I see four shapes beneath the great twisted branches of an oak, rooting in the leaf mold for acorns, tearing up the ground, and moving slowly east toward the dawn. "There they are," Ron hisses, and we hunker down in the brush and freeze. In the shadow of the tree, and from a distance of seventy yards, it is impossible to see more than the dark form of what resembles a hog—or a sheep or a pony or a baby gorilla, depending on what you are looking for in the first place. The light is still weak, and we decide to move closer to get a better shot, though I have made up my mind to leave the Mark III in its holster unless I am attacked. I would rather forgo the pleasure of the kill than blow off my foot.

We move cautiously around the edge of a

Stalking the Wild Boar

thicket of poison oak and come out slightly on top of the clearing, to the left of our prey and twenty or thirty yards closer. A bit below us is a good stand of low coyote brush, and on hands and knees, one at a time, we stealthily move toward it—Terri first, me, then Ron. Three of the boar are back in the tall grass beyond the oak, but one stands in full view, broadside, chewing mindlessly and staring in our direction—right at our bush, as a matter of fact. He does not seem as large, somehow, as I remember him, and with morning light beginning to filter into the valley, not as black either.

“Ron,” Terri whispers, “you sure that’s a boar?”

Ron is cautiously retracting the bolt on his carbine, injecting a cartridge into its chamber.

“Ron, what are those white spots on its belly?”

He eases the bolt home. “Sow,” he whispers. “The big ones are in the grass.” To me he says, “See if you can work your way up-canyon a bit. Keep your eye peeled for the others, and if they come busting out when I shoot, open up. And for Christ’s sake, be quiet. They locate us, and we’re in trouble.”

On my belly I start worming my way toward a patch of scrub oak, keeping my eye on that solitary pig, hoping that the wind won’t blow my scent toward him and give me away. Ten yards. Twenty. My pants are soaked with dew, and my glasses keep fogging up. A red-tailed hawk soars over the ridge, hunting, and a rabbit I have not seen scampers for cover. Then I am behind the scrub and skulking my way around its far edge to where I can see the bottom of the canyon again.

All of a sudden, from the opposite slope and behind me, I hear . . . the dulcet tones of children’s voices. Yelling, crashing through the brush, floundering about. “Hey, Dad, there’s one, Dad, right there, you turkey,” and the next thing I know there are a number of explosions. A lot of dirt flies around that one lonely hog, who stands dumbfounded, no doubt wondering what on earth is happening here, anyway? World War Three? Then more shots, and he rears on his hind legs, does an *entrechat quatre*, a *plié*, and buys the farm. For a moment all is quiet, even the boys. Then, from out of the brush, his three companions burst in a mad-dened charge, grunting, obviously confused, but crazed killers nevertheless, looking for somebody to run down and stomp. Our assault force drops two of them in their tracks, and the fourth . . . well, to be honest, the fourth just tucks his kinky tail between his fat little hams and shags up the creek.

From behind our respective covers we come, the hunters, striding down the hill into the clearing, stopping, approaching warily, guns at ready in case one of these awesome brutes is only wounded and

still able to muster an attack. It is a needless precaution. The enemy has been rendered inoperative.

“Hey, Eamon,” says Perry, standing over what now appears to be a rather small pile of pig. “Why do they have tags in their ears?”

Later that afternoon, after a call to the county brand inspector to find out who owned “certain swine found grazing on private property,” and after a hit or two on the bottle of Pinch Eamon bought his wife for Christmas but hasn’t wrapped yet, three of us drive up the gulch road to the Hartman ranch and have a little talk with the foreman in charge. He is very understanding. He himself once mistook a Holstein cow for a six-point buck, back in his native state of Oregon, and he can easily see how one might confuse four Poland China piglets for a herd of wild boar, given bad enough light and great enough distance. “You boys is what they might call the victims of hawg fever,” he opines. We scuff our toes in the dirt and squint at the sky, wishing it would rain. “But I reckon no real damage been done. If you all are willing to settle up on a per-pound basis—oh, say, a hundred and fifty ought to be about right—why we’ll just call her fair and square.”

“We appreciate that,” we murmur.

“Why sure. I mean, no call to bring the state in on a deal like this. They’d just fine your butts and take your meat. Now you’ve did it, might as leave enjoy it.”

“The state?” we ask.

“The Department of Ag. You know, them brand inspectors take a pretty . . . dim . . . well, now, bless me. I’ll be dinged if that ain’t his Chivvy coming up the road right now.”

My wife finds little that amuses her. “You’re a regular Euell Gibbons,” she says at the supper table. “Keep this up and we *will* be eating pine trees. If we had all the money you’ve paid in fines over the last year and a half we could eat at Ernie’s every night and still save money.”

“Naw,” I say. “We couldn’t.”

She shovels an omelette onto my plate and opens the cottage cheese. “Undersized abalone, illegal clamming, steelhead fishing without a license, transporting steers in an unsafe vehicle, impounding fees every time your chickens get loose and wipe out the Lipnacs’ begonias. Now you’re a rustler.” She pours me a glass of nonfat milk. “Giants in the earth, my ass. It’s a good thing you weren’t born a hundred years ago or they’d hang every last one of you.”

“Shut up and pass the Bac-o-Bits,” I sigh. “I never could stand eggs without side meat.” □

LETTER TO KATHY FROM WISDOM

by Richard Hugo

My dearest Kathy: When I heard your tears and those of your mother over the phone from Moore, from the farm I've never seen and see again and again under the most uncaring of skies, I thought of this town I'm writing from, where we came lovers years ago to fish. How odd we seemed to them here, a lovely young girl and a fat middle 40's man they mistook for father and daughter before the sucker lights in their eyes flashed on. That was when we kissed their petty scorn to dust. Now, I eat alone in the café we ate in then, thinking of your demons, the sad days you've seen, the hospitals, doctors, the agonizing breakdowns that left you ashamed. All my other letter poems I've sent to poets. But you, your soft round form beside me in our bed at Jackson, you were a poet then, curving lines I love against my groin. Oh, my tenderest raccoon, odd animal from nowhere scratching for a home, please believe I want to plant whatever poem will grow inside you like a decent life. And when the wheat you've known forever sours in the wrong wind and you smell it dying in those acres where you played, please know old towns that we loved in and old loves matter, playmates, toys, and we take from our lives those days when everything moved, tree, cloud, water, sun, blue between two clouds, and moon, days that danced, vibrating days, chance poem. I want one who's wondrous and kind to you. I want him sensitive to wheat and how wheat bends in cloud shade without wind. Kathy, this is the worst time of day, nearing five, gloom ubiquitous as harm, work shifts changing. And our lives are on the line. Until we die our lives are on the mend. I'll drive home when I finish this, over the pass that's closed to all but a few, that to us was always open, good days years ago when our bodies were in motion and the road rolled out below us like our days. Call me again when the tears build big inside you, because you were my lover and you matter, because I send this letter with my hope, my warm love. Dick.

MAKING HISTORY

A story by Wallace E. Knight

I am the eye that sees everything, unblinking, unwinking, unshifting, the ultimate biconvex, eye set and waiting. I am the hand that writes what I see, no matter what, precisely, from eight to five weekdays. I am, I suppose, the only one who does this; certainly I have never heard of another, and that is a true and shameful loss. I wish there were thousands such as I.

You understand what is happening, of course. Life is running through us, around us, over and under, and almost everything that happens is unnoticed. What do you remember?

Tell me what you remember strongest and then tell me the day, the temperature, the way the wind blew, the names of people on the street, their expressions, what birds flew, the condition of the roofing on the nearest house, the direction of contrails if planes were up and the sky was blue, and where the postman was.

Tell me your strongest memory and I say you don't know anything about it except what happened to you, and you're certainly not immortal. When your life trickles out your most important things will be absolutely nothing, not even buried like leaves in shale. And this is because you don't make an individual of yourself by identifying the things around you, by seeing, citing, listing, and saving the press of reality under your nose.

History is the past systematized? History is an account agreed upon? That's flummery and shoddy thinking. History defies coordination, and people never really agree about even the tiny array of records and views that are kept. It's every collection of ourselves that we don't burn, but somehow put away for subsequent assessing. The finest thing we're leaving our descendents is the sanitary landfill; they'll be able to dig it out and see us.

History is looking at things that have randomly interlocked.

I see, and I write. Long ago I came to realize that I couldn't see everything everywhere, and so I decided I'd take one block in town—the most convenient one, the one I look down on—and write its history for so long as I could, ten or twenty years. I knew soon that even this was too ambitious. Obviously I could see this block only while I was

awake and undistracted, only from one viewpoint—toward the west, from the sixth floor of the building in which I work, across McFarley Street—and with distinct limitations regarding the names of visitors to this place, their thoughts and reasons, and their motives. But even so, I had to do it.

So I've kept records for nearly seven years, and these now fill forty-two notebooks and grow at the rate of from ten to fourteen pages a day. And there are seven other books of supplementary data gathered from garbage dumps of libraries, court-houses, newspaper files, conversations, overhearings.

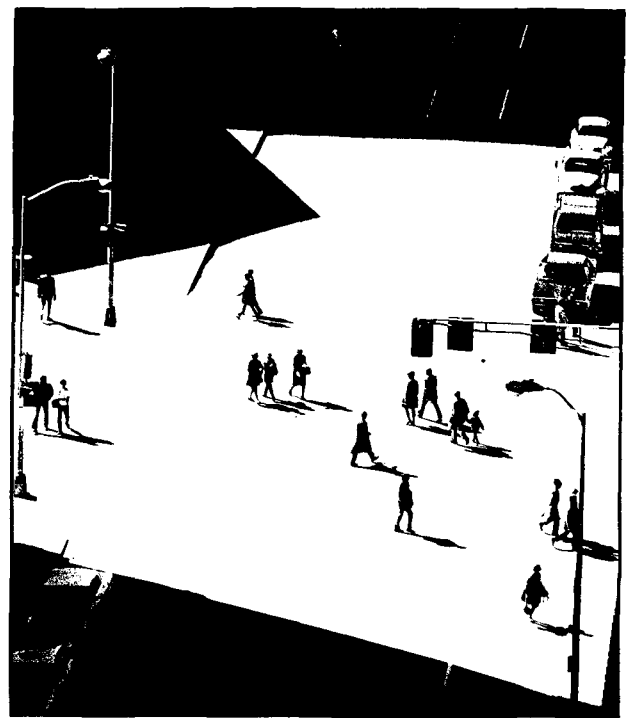
This is doubtless the most complete record of its type anywhere, and any page of it is proof absolute of the worthlessness of the state papers of Zachary Taylor or of any biography ever written.

I cannot say that I came by my convictions on history easily. Indeed, I wasted a year trying to write a one-minute history. My thought then was to compile a record that would report what every living soul in this town was doing at one brief point in time—say, from 2:30 to 2:31 P.M. on Tuesday, October 7.

Who knows what people do? Believe me, no one knows.

First I had difficulty finding the right moment to record. (Would it be accurate to find fewer than five percent of my fellow men asleep just because I had chosen a time in mid-afternoon? Should so many be shown in school, so few rolling together in bed, so many working?) No time was right, but I chose anyway.

Then I found I had to depend on others to tell me what they were doing. I went to the newspaper's editor and explained my problem, and he assigned a reporter who wrote a feature that made me into a fool. I talked to the mayor, the police chief, school superintendent, to all who'd listen, and hardly any would. I got pledges and snickers, and after the appointed time came—a minute that should have been an unselfconscious run of heartbeats—those who remembered me sent in cards that were lies, and those who ignored me were faceless and a majority. And I knew that I had



done nothing to situate the cars on the streets or to measure the ebb or flow of happenings. I didn't even report results; no one cared, and I threw away my forms and listings. A year wasted.

History is garbage synthesized, and this bringing together is a process that cannot be entrusted to volunteers or assigned to agents. I have my block, seen from the east, sunlit at eight, shadowed at five, and complete as any world imaginable.

Clearly I cannot describe it properly for you here. If you care to read my notebooks, you may; if you want to look out of my window, look. Reality is free.

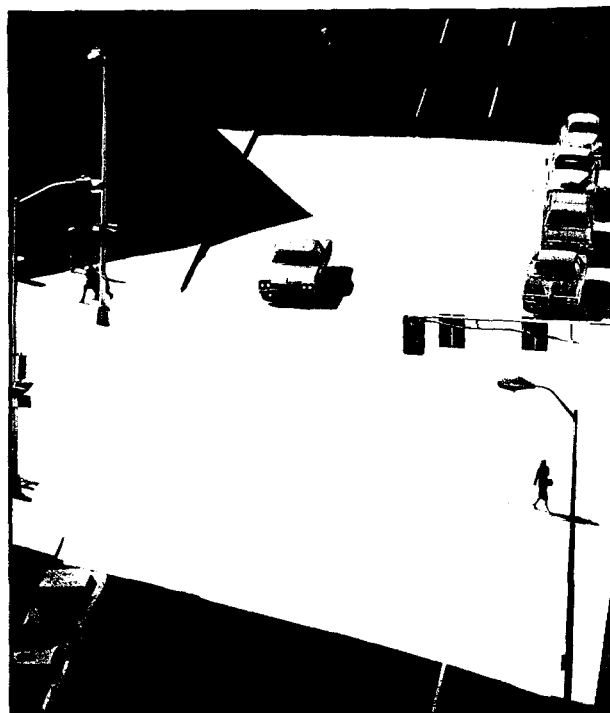
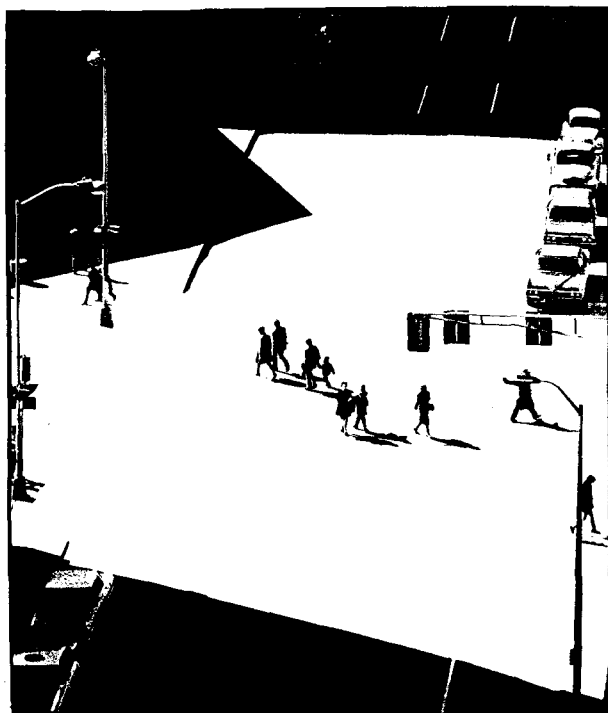
There are eight buildings, if you count the parking lot office just below me. There is, foremost and loveliest, St. Luke's Church, facing Quincy Avenue, at my right. It is ivy-covered sandstone, built 1887-1888, flanked by a brick education building erected in 1923. The latter also is clad in ivy. Beyond is the office and printing plant of the *Herald-Star*, corner of Quincy and Sixth, the furthestmost range of my block, some 275 feet from my eye. The Heritage Club is at Sixth and Towson, on the block's southwest corner. It serves lunch at sequential noons for Lions, Civitan, Kiwanis, and Rotary club members, does an average of nine wedding receptions a month, and has the busiest bar in town. Beside it, on Towson Avenue, is an electrical equipment supply house, Towne Electric, and the St. Luke's parking lot, the church's property spanning the block from south to north. Closest by are the Macrae parking lot, which handles up to 200 vehicles on peak shopping days; the old Emerson Antique Shop, situated in the only residence still

on the block, a brick structure begun in 1826 and remodeled extensively in 1871; and a medical building, corner of McFarley and Quincy, owned by three elderly physicians and with offices for ten M.D.'s, two dentists, and a dispensing optician. For construction and maintenance information see Supplements 1 through 4; climate, Supplement 5; soil tests and geological data, Supplement 7; information on occupants is available in summary form in Volumes 1 through 12, and thereafter all changes are provided chronologically.

Today will be Kiwanis day. The electric company, which always opens first, has had nineteen walk-ins and six trucks. There are seventy-four vehicles (including one telephone company service van) in the Macrae lot. Two men are digging a narrow, shallow ditch from the rear of the St. Luke's education building to the fishpond in the church's garden, a recent and attractive development almost in the exact center of the block. It is 10:16 A.M. What I've told you is there to see.

And it is wonderful, and a wonder, that I am enabled to see all this. I've made my job carefully to permit it, I assure you. By corporate definition I am a stock transfer clerk, and by persistence and devotion I have wrapped this foolish employment in mystery so that my superiors have concluded that only I can do it. Each morning I receive, from our transfer agent in New York, a list of people who have sold or purchased stock as of a day a week earlier. I record this information on file cards, adding, subtracting, deleting, and initiating as necessary, and then I bind the master sheets in large blue volumes that are retained in a vault in the corporate secretary's office. No one here knows that exactly the same records are being kept by the transfer agent; none knows that if my records were destroyed, duplicates could be obtained overnight. I take no vacations, and I am credited with rare and obscure devotion to duty. I also keep a record of stock opening prices, daily highs and lows, and

Wallace Knight writes out of Ashland, Kentucky. His most recent story in *The Atlantic* was "Searchers" in the February issue.



closings, which I copy out of newspapers. I work for an idiot.

The ditch the men are digging appears to be intended for a water line to serve the pond, which is a green, stone-edged, shallow concrete tub (10' x 6' x 1½') announced three years ago in the July 14 St. Luke's bulletin as a meditation pool to the glory of God, in memory of Col. Edwin Forester, and a suitable enhancement to the old statue of a nameless saint that earlier had weathered in the garden alone. Since its construction, the pool has been supplied with water through hoses, and no drainage system has existed. Perhaps both a supply line and a drain will be forthcoming.

The two have dug steadily as the temperature in the sunswept garden has risen from 68 at eight A.M. to 84 at ten and 87 at 10:46. This is July 26, in the third week of the hazy blue humid drought that is stunting corn and killing grass throughout the state. One man is tall, deliberate, and a steady worker. The other is shorter and plump, and although sweat stains all of his shirt but the upper sleeves, he has been digging only sporadically. I have detected through my binoculars nothing to identify them, and so at noon perhaps I will try to talk to them and learn their names.

Just leave the papers in the In basket, dear. No, I am not looking for pretty girls, dear, I am looking at the parking lot. None of your goddamn business, dear.

I don't like interruptions and questions; obviously neither is good for my work. It's a pity to treat the office supply girl like that—after all, she's only trying to be friendly—but I simply can't permit loitering and gossip. I don't want to be hated, but I certainly can't afford to be loved; one thing and another, and I'd soon be as unmysterious as the *Herald-Star's* editorial policy.

Without mystery I wouldn't last six months here.

The greatest mystery I never solved was the sycamore leaf business of three winters ago, the Great Sycamore

more Caper, the Buoyant Buttonwood Enigma.

One November day—the 14th, to be exact, at 10:35 A.M.—I saw and made note of a great many large dry sycamore leaves swept loosely against the fence at the rear of the Emerson Antiques lot. This lot is fifty feet wide. At first I thought little of the matter, but before the day was out I asked the crucial question of myself—"Where did they come from?"

There were sycamore leaves at the rear of the Emerson lot. There were none in front of the house, or on the street, or in adjacent lots. There are no sycamore trees on the block, not even little ones pushing up in neglected corners. The nearest sycamore tree, I determined within the week, is nine blocks away!

A freak wind blew them there? I don't think so. Because of the configuration of the hills and the route of the river, our winds come almost always from the east and southeast, and that nearest tree is northwest.

Were they brought there for mulch? No; sadly, the Emerson lot is unkempt, except for that portion pedestrians see.

Perhaps they blew from a passing truck. Perhaps they were carried there by playing children. Or they could have been brought by someone intent on fooling me. But in all of these thoughts I find little merit.

The simple truth is that the sycamore leaves comprise a mystery that is absolutely baffling, far beyond the reach of orderly deduction and, now that they have rotted against the earth so only the veins and shapes of some remain, and very few of those, forever insoluble.

The diggers, foolish men, in all this heat have started drinking. The short one has a bottle in his lunch kit, which has been hooked by its handle over a branch in the mulberry tree by the pool. They got cold sodas from the education building machine (11:17 A.M.) and drank part and then

poured whiskey into the narrow soda-bottle necks to refill them, and now they are standing looking at each other, drinking stolidly. Now they resume work, their ditch not yet halfway from building to pool, close by the tall statue, hours from being finished.

Completed, the first edition of today's paper, at 11:28, two minutes early; the first truck has left the *Herald-Star* dock for a district office twenty-two miles away, where the wire-bound bundles will be given to route men and spread across two counties. Three other trucks will leave soon, at ten-minute intervals, and the mailers at the *Herald-Star* will relax and eat and then wrap post office copies and wait for the Home Edition, due out at 1:50.

A word to the wise: if your son gets a paper route, buy him a good pair of wire pliers or his first day will be miserable.

Macrae's is beginning to jam up as the Kiwanians arrive, park, and then stroll down Towson Avenue to the Heritage Club. One hundred and six vehicles, 11:50. At noon, 126. The park-and-lock holes are filled, and now the sole attendant is moving cars into rows of three and four.

Noon. Life at noon is never so interesting, because there are so many extraneous people out. Most of the 300 in this building go milling about, as do those from the other buildings, offices, the urban nooks and recesses. Noon is disorderly, and structures and blocks and neighborhoods lose their singularity. A town is at its least at noon.

I won't go today to talk to the men behind St. Luke's. They are sprawled in the shadow of the forked mulberry, eating, drinking, and apparently at times bickering. The tall one laughs and pokes and badgers; the sweaty short man turns away and then back, his gestures abrupt. If I were to walk up to them and start to talk, I would be extraneous; I have learned that I—above all, I—must never interrupt an action's flow.

And I doubt if I could get their names anyway. I'm not good at whisking information off people, especially red-faced laborers at lunch. Tomorrow will do; the ditch must be a very long one for them.

Please don't assume that I am a casual procrastinator, however. I do not approve of neglect. I will get their names and a definition of their task, but I have learned that there are times to act and times to defer action. History can't be rushed. I'm sure you would agree that it simply would have been inappropriate to interview Washington at Monmouth. And there is the collateral hazard, indeed, that a historian may reshape events by his very presence. I shudder when I see reporters and television cameramen gathering prior to meetings,

conventions, processions. They should look only for what is happening, or at the things that have occurred. In many ways we are making our future so predictable that it is no wonder we are condemned to live it.

A sandwich, an apple, a slice of cake. A trip to the water cooler and to the toilet; a walk, a stalk through the corporate secretary's office, nods and unsmiling nods, and now I am back, one p.m. sharp. For an hour I look up, scan, look down, note, type, and today's transfers are done. Idiocy.

Look out there: I bet you could never guess which building has the deepest excavation below it. It's the house—Emerson's—which has a very ordinary basement and then, underneath, an uncapped cistern. Isaac Emerson stored water there until the city lines were installed in 1904. The antique people chipped off the capping brickwork and drained it in 1957 and found, at the bottom, more than forty round black rocks, baseball size. I bet you don't know what they were there for, and neither do I. Another mystery.

The *Herald-Star* is the only building in the block that has people in it all night. They have a three-man evening staff in the city room until midnight, maintenance people usually until two or so, and two janitors who drive a dirty truck home at six, an hour after the day editorial people start arriving.

The Heritage Club frequently stays up late, too.

My night records are fragments, of course. I've never tried to watch after five.

But at one time or another I've covered every inch of the block. I've examined *in situ*, inside and out. I've been down in the cistern (used now to store boxes, scrap lumber, and bulky seasonal stuff), and I've been up the St. Luke's steeple as far as anyone can go—up an inside ladder until both my shoulders touched crossbeams, where still the outline of a door exists. Once, would you believe it, a man was sent periodically to polish the cross; he pushed open the door, which was artfully slatted over, climbed two feet above it, locked his legs around the circular base of the cross, and shined and varnished. Then the beautiful black and gray slate roof began to go bad, starlings infested the steeple, and in July, 1948, the slate was pried off and asphalt shingles were nailed down. Now there's no easy way to polish the cross, and it has turned an ailing green.

The poorest maintenance record is surely that of the medical building, however. It is managed by a nephew of one of its owners. The three old doctors all live in Florida. And one of these days the whole building is going to collapse, probably in flu season when six or eight patients cough in unison.

The forcefulness of construction is marvelous, and I have seen too little of it from this window. Once there were residences all around the block. Two stood where Macrae parks cars. They were allowed to rot and got torn down, and somehow this

was considered progress. If the measure of a man is in his ability to neglect or destroy, I suppose it is progress. I prefer builders, though.

Now—2:48 P.M.—the ditch is approximately three-fifths of the way to the pool, and the two laborers are surely three-fifths exhausted. Temperature 96; wind four m.p.h. from SSE. Airlessness might be better; such a breeze doesn't cool. It merely brings in new waves of humidity.

They are soaked. Sweat darkens their gray work trousers, and the tall man has taken off his shirt and draped it on the mulberry tree. They are working beside the statue, ditching quite near its base, and now the heavy, shorter man sits down in its shade and leans against it in soundless fatigue.

Soundless? I should be more precise. I cannot hear weariness, but I know the men themselves are not silent. Their chests heave. There is sound and clatter when they dig and shovel. And they are talking. Presumably they are having an argument, and it is not eased by their periodic pauses to drink from the short man's bottle, probably blended bourbon, as that's what men here drink.

They are standing in the sun behind St. Luke's, sweating and openly drinking, but there is hardly any chance that they'll be seen by anyone other than me. In the garden they are in a mid-block island of green, and although they are between the church and its parking lot, no one has walked that way since noon. I can see only one other person at the moment, in fact, a newspaper street salesman (an old man called Pencil Wallen, who sells in front of the bank two blocks away) who has come to the *Herald-Star* to replenish his supply of Home Editions before five. My building has only one row of windows on this side, and all but mine stay darkened by venetian blinds.

If I were to guess—and I prefer not to—I'd say it is an argument over who is to use the mattock and who will shovel. It's easier to shovel, of course, when the ditch is a shallow one that need not be squared precisely. The man with the mattock risks sprinkling himself with dirt, and he must stand beclouding his feet and legs in dust. These are irritating matters, particularly when one is sweaty.

Every task has its tricks and conventions. A man who is regularly required to use the mattock becomes the social inferior of the shovel man; this is well understood among laborers. The mattock man may develop fine back muscles—to the extent that he becomes ponderously round-shouldered—but he knows, and so does the shovel man, that his strength is secondary to the remarkable skill an experienced shoveler can develop. Consider: with a long-handled shovel that is pointed at its tip and rounded on the bottom, the digger is expected to create a ditch that has flat sides, a level floor, sharp 90-degree angles, and no loose dirt to clutter and demean it. Good men do this.

Once I went to the funeral of a man who had

dug ditches all his life, and the preacher, in his farewell over the casket, said, "Mr. Foster squared his ditches and kept them cleaner than any man I ever saw." I admire that preacher. He knew what was going on around him.

In Macrae's are eighty-nine cars. A taxi picks up four women at the Heritage Club. It is 3:27 P.M., and the short man behind St. Luke's, stepping out of the ditch, has struck the tall one across the forehead with the flat side of his mattock. The blow started waist-high, the mattock head sweeping up, just above the hands of the tall laborer as they started to rise in defense, just as his mouth opened, the mattock head twisting gracefully in flight so that it crushed rather than cut. The tall man has now fallen violently backward. For a moment his body was stretched, straining flat, and then his arms, still rising, flapped over his head and onto the earth, his knees pulled up jerkily, he flattened, and then relaxed. He is motionless, and so, momentarily, is the short man, who looks at him and drops the mattock, looks, first into the face of his companion and now all around, turning full circle with intentness and hate and wariness in his face.

This is the first entry involving a major injury that I have made in almost two years. This is actually, you should understand, the first notable inside-the-block injury in my seven years of observing. Two years ago in October (4:47 P.M., October 9) a high school junior named Harmon T. Willig ran to catch a football thrown by a friend, leaped high across the sidewalk, missed the pass and impaled his palm on one of the spiked wrought-iron fence pickets in front of Emerson's. It took almost an hour to detach Willig, as the picket had to be sawed. The *Herald-Star* got pictures. But, even so, this was just on the edge of the block, and not really in it.

There have been numerous instances of minor accidents and near accidents, but nothing such as this. I will develop a section on violence. It should be interesting.

The short man, whose energy seems to have returned effectively, has in this past minute undertaken another endeavor; he is pushing on the base of the statue, a shoulder against the saint's stone skirt, pushing like a relentless bulldozer of flesh and concentration. The muscles of his back bulge. He turns, squares himself against the statue's feet, and now digs his heels into the earth and thrusts backward. In one piece, slowly, saint and base fall, and he crawls behind them into the ditch and scrambles out, and the tall stone figure is beside the tall man, its head inches from the man's bleeding head.

It is difficult to watch time. It is 3:28 and a half; the short man twists the tall one's head, lifts his

body, clutches hair, and butts the head into the stone, smears blood in a rich circle onto the rough stone, and drops the head back. It is a movement that indicates finality, that dropping of the head.

He walks to the mulberry tree and has a long drink, straight from the bottle. He looks around once more, scanning the fences and the hedges and walkways. He picks up the mattock and methodically digs it into the earth a dozen times, loosening the soil for another foot of ditch.

At Towne Electric a delivery truck pulls in and parks, and across the block, in front of the *Herald-Star*, a car horn begins blowing. It blows impatiently until a man hurries from the building and leans into the car's open window.

Abruptly the short man begins to run. He leaps across the statue and runs to the St. Luke's education building and throws its rear door open. He enters: 3:33.

The most important thing now is discipline. I have trained myself, I hope; I must give a balanced account based on balanced observation.

From the NE corner, counterclockwise: Quincy Medical, no activity other than a car pulling up, parking, waiting. Education building, three people moving (rear), one of them the short workman, the others the Reverend Mr. Farnsworth Hayes, in shirtsleeves, and Mrs. Edythe Lancaster, church secretary, who proves to be weepily excitable. A still figure. The church, nothing going on. Ditto *Herald-Star*, except for its lot, where a truck is being gassed. Heritage Club, four dogs have gathered behind it and are nuzzling a trash can. Towne Electric, nothing. Church parking, same, with same five parked cars. Macrae's, down to eighty-seven, now eighty-six as a blue Mercury leaves. Emerson's, two walk-in elderly ladies arriving, talking. One has a plastic shopping bag.

In the center: Mr. Hayes is (3:35) on his knees beside the motionless tall man, (3:37) back inside the education building, (3:40) back out, talking earnestly to Mrs. Lancaster, who weeps and stands peeping from across the garden, (3:43) back in, (3:47) back out leading two men from the ambulance that has rushed screeching and flashing to the front of the building. One man runs off, re-emerges on Quincy, and whips the ambulance (with unnecessary showmanship, if you'll excuse editorializing based on a long-felt prejudice of mine) around the block and into the church parking lot. As he backs swiftly and noisily, six people are attracted (two from Macrae's, two from the electric company, two pedestrians from east on Towson) and the dogs from the Heritage Club run over happily.

A carrier is unfolded, the shape and substance of the tall man is eased onto it, and the ambulance

rushes (3:54) out and off. The Reverend Mr. Hayes has gone along.

What fascination there is to a siren's piercing blast! A siren's song: apt parallel. The ambulance comes and people gather; it goes away and they go too, each of them watching, listening until the last surge and warble fade.

Not much is left behind an ambulance's departure.

When I hear an ambulance I always think of Joe Bonnaman's gloomy remark: "God, it gives me a pain when I hear them Syrians runnin' all over town." Joe had been a hospital orderly before he got into the police department. What he said, he said more than twenty years ago, and now I think of him on signal, and that is the way history is made.

There are only two of them left in the garden, Mrs. Lancaster and the squat workman, and (4:00) their conversation is quiet and very solemn. They stand close to the mulberry tree, but not in its shade. They do not look at the statue, or toward the ditch.

One is left. Mrs. Lancaster has gone inside. The short man, alone, now stands, now strolls; he takes the stiff dry shirt from the branch that has held it and folds it neatly, picks up mattock and shovel and leans them together against the education building wall by the door, returns, unlatches his lunch pail, and takes a long, despairing drink of whiskey. Then, cupping his hands, he drinks water from the spigot almost hidden in the building's ivy.

I can predict the rest, and so can you. Soon two men, one perhaps in uniform, will come and look at the ditch and statue and will talk to the workman as Mrs. Lancaster stands by nodding. They will get down on their hands and knees and look at the blood on the saint's gown, and (50-50) someone will take pictures. There will be a lot of pointing. Mr. Hayes will return and talk and point. A few other people will come and talk and point.

But I know things that you can't predict. I know that between 4:45 and 5:15, the car population of Macrae's lot will decline from more than fifty to not more than thirteen or fewer than eight. I know that four trucks will park, neatly and close, behind Towne Electric, and the last man out will lock the enclosure gate. I know that a boy in yellow boots will hose down the concrete behind the *Herald-Star*, and that Oliver Barnhart, janitor, will close the door at Emerson's behind the two old lady rummagers and the two old lady clerks. Of these things that uncertain commodity we call history is relentlessly made.

I know, too, that now I won't have to ask for the workmen's names.

And here are the men for the investigation and report. One is in uniform. Mrs. Lancaster, glum and tearful in the center of the precise circle of the eye I cast upon her, points toward the statue (4:31) and the men nod. □

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THE LAST YEARS OF H. L. MENCKEN

by William Manchester

"As he grew older, he grew worse," was the epitaph Mencken suggested for himself. But, like other ideas of his, that was not a widely held opinion.

"**T**he cooks here do a swell job with soft-shell crabs," Mencken said in a gravelly voice, peering over his spectacles. Beneath the old-fashioned center part of his white hair, his pot-blue eyes gleamed like twin gas jets. "They fry them in the altogeth'er," he rasped. "Then they add a small jockstrap of bacon."

It was June 2, 1947. We were in the dining room of the Maryland Club. The meeting was our first—I had just flown in from a midwestern graduate school, where I was writing my dissertation on his early literary criticism—and it was the beginning of a seven-year friendship which I cherished, and cherish still, despite the dirty tricks fate began to play on him eighteen months after it began.

"This is a very high-toned club," he said over the crabs. "Nothing but men. Any member who suffers a heart attack must be carried outside to the front steps before a nurse can attend him."

He was in fine form that Monday noon. The thought that he himself might fall the victim of a seizure and wind up in the hands of nurses was very far away. At sixty-six he was still at the height of his remarkable powers, and had, in fact, just completed the most productive period in his career. Since 1940, he had been feuding with his paper, the *Baltimore Sun*, as a result of the *Sun*'s support of what he had called "Roosevelt's War." Holed up in his study at 1524 Hollins Street, he had written *Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days*, *Heathen Days*, *A Christmas Story*, *A New Dictionary of Quotations*, and two supplements to *The American Language*, and was, when we met, at work on *A Mencken Chrestomathy*. His machete was still long and sharp and heavy, and he had never swung it with greater gusto.

Face-to-face with him, I was enormously impressed. Alistair Cooke once observed that Mencken had "the longest torso on the shortest legs in the entire history of legmen," and Mencken himself said there would be no point in erecting a statue to him, because it would just look like a monument to a defeated alderman; but actually he was a man of great physical presence. To be sure, his torso was ovoid, his ruddy face homely, and his legs not only stubby but also thin and bowed. Nevertheless, there was a sense of dignity and purpose about all his movements, and when you were with him it was impossible to forget that you were watching a great original. Nobody else could stuff Uncle Willie stogies into a seersucker jacket with the flourish of Mencken, nor wipe a blue bandanna across his brow so dramatically. His friends treasured everything about him, because the whole of the man was manifest in each of his aspects—the tilt of his head, his close-fitting clothes, his high-crowned felt hat creased in the distinct fashion of the 1920s, his strutting walk, his abrupt gestures, his habit of holding a cigar between his thumb and forefinger like a baton, the rouncy in-

flection of his voice, and, most of all, those extraordinary eyes: so large, and intense, and merry. He was *sui generis* in all ways, and the instant I saw him I wanted to write his biography.

After reading my thesis the following summer, he agreed. ("I marvel at the hard work you put into it," he wrote me. "It tells me many things about my own self that I didn't know myself. . . . You will be rewarded in Heaven throughout eternity.") He did more. Swallowing his pride, he asked the *Sun* to give me a job so that I could support myself while working on the book. My journalistic career was launched that September, and while I was unlikely to match the trajectory of his soaring star (at my age, twenty-five, he had been a managing editor), it did give us something else to talk about.

Beginning that autumn, we talked a great deal, sometimes at the *Sun*, which he now began visiting with growing frequency; other times in his club, his home, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Miller Brothers' restaurant, and on long walks through downtown Baltimore. There was, of course, no pretense to conversation between equals: I regarded him with the special deference of the fledgling writer for the master. The high-ceilinged Hollins Street sitting room, with its cheery fireplace, dark rosewood furniture, and Victorian bric-a-brac, became a kind of shrine for me. I cherished his letters to me, which were even more frequent than our talks, for he loved correspondence, always preferring the written word to the telephone. And I kept elaborate notes on all our contacts, which, he being Mencken, really were notable.

By the spring of 1948, he was a daily visitor to the *Sun*. In the paper's morgue he advised a man updating the Mencken obituary to "Leave it as it is. Just add one line: 'As he grew older, he grew worse.'" One afternoon on Charles Street, we encountered two sedate women from the *Sun*'s library coming the other way, and Mencken cried out heartily, "Hello, girls! How's the profession?" Later, one of them said to me, "Of course, he didn't mean it the way it sounded." I knew that was exactly how he had meant it. By then, though, it was clear that he was yearning for a consummation of his rapprochement with the paper. The feud formally ended the following summer, when he arrived in Philadelphia to join the *Sun* men covering that year's presidential nominations and wrote happily of "the traditional weather of a national convention . . . a rising temperature, very high humidity, and lazy puffs of gummy wind from the mangrove swamps sur-



H. L. Mencken

William Manchester's first book was a biography of Mencken. His latest is *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America*.

rounding the city." Of the three political parties then taking the field, he preferred the Progressives, because they were the most preposterous.

My best recollection of the campaign which followed is of a Henry Wallace rally in Baltimore's Fifth Regiment Armory which I covered with Mencken. By then everyone in the audience had read the old man's *Sun* articles taunting their hero, and they knew the old man would be there that night. After the speeches, a mob of them crowded around the press bench, where, incredibly, he had unsheathed his portable typewriter and set to work. He had decided to knock out his piece with them watching. I know of no other writer who could have performed under the circumstances. There were perhaps a score of hostile, humorless men and women in an arc behind him, peering over his shoulder, and behind them were others who were calling out, "What's he saying about us?" The outrageous phrases were called back, the crowd growled—and the old man hunted and pecked on, enjoying himself hugely. He even hummed that catchy little ditty, "Friendly Henry Wallace."

Mencken was immensely amused, as the *Sun* hierarchy was not, by Truman's unexpected victory. He felt that it justified his assessment of democracy as a comic spectacle. He returned to Hollins Street, refreshed, to tackle a new book. Meantime, I had written the opening sections of my biography, and he had read them. On September 27 he had written me, "It seems to me that, as they stand, the first two chapters are excellent. Some of your generalizations surprise me, and even horrify me, but they are yours, not mine. Don't let anyone tell you how to write it. Do it in your own way. You are obviously far ahead of most young writers, and I have every confidence in you." Thus we were both busy with thickening manuscripts as winter approached.

On Wednesday, November 24, we were to take a break. A luncheon reservation had been made at the Maryland Club for Mencken, Evelyn Waugh, a Jesuit priest, and me. Waugh and Mencken had never met; the priest and I had arranged everything, like seconds before a duel. The encounter never took place. Disaster struck the old man the evening before.

Mencken was fascinated by the frailties of the human body, his own and everybody else's. His letters to me and to others reflected his preoccupation with illness and anatomy. "Imagine," he wrote typically, "hanging the stones of a man *outside*, where they are forever getting themselves knocked, pinched and bruised. Any decent mechanic would have put them in the exact center of the body, protected by a body envelope twice as thick as even a Presbyterian's skull. Moreover, consider certain parts of the female—always

too large or too small. The elemental notion of standardization seems to have never presented itself to the celestial Edison."

Some weeks not a screed would go into the mailbox without some complaint, such as, "I have a sore mouth, can't smoke, it is 90 degrees, and at least twenty pests are in town"; or, "My liver is swelled to a thickness of seven inches, and there are spiders in my urine." Other times he would audit his agonies—"an onslaught of pimples, aches, razor cuts, arch pains, and asthma"; or, "asthma, piles, tongue trouble, hay fever, alcoholic liver, weak heels, dandruff, etc." Once he wrote George Jean Nathan:

My ailments this morning come to the following:

- a. A burn on the tongue (healing)
- b. A pimple inside the jaw
- c. A sour stomach
- d. Pain in the prostate
- e. Burning in the gospel pipe (always a preliminary of the hay fever season)
- f. A cut finger
- g. A small pimple inside the nose (going away)
- h. A razor cut, smarting
- i. Tired eyes

Nathan, feeling that this was too much, sent him a set of false teeth, a hairpiece, a cork leg, six bottles of liniment, and a copy of *What Every Boy Should Know*. In the return mail he received a querulous note asking why a bottle of asthma medicine had been omitted: "I am hacking and wheezing like Polonius."

By autumn of 1948, he was convinced that the end was near—with some reason. His friends had long ago written him off as a hypochondriac, for he had been crying wolf as long as they could remember, but a real wolf had been quietly stalking him for ten years. On April 12, 1938, he had suffered a slight stroke. Two years later, his doctor had found evidence that his cerebral circulation had been impaired. Mencken immediately started a journal to document the stages in his disintegration. By the evening of November 23, 1948, when he called at the apartment of his secretary, Rosalind C. Lohrfinck, preparatory to taking her to dinner, his deathwatch on himself amounted to a thick sheaf of typescript, some fifty pages in all. There were to be no entries after that, for that was the night his preoccupation with afflictions stopped being funny.

He was having a cocktail with Mrs. Lohrfinck when, in the middle of a lucid sentence, he began to babble incoherently. Alarmed, she called his physician. When the doctor arrived, Mencken was pacing back and forth, ranting. At Johns Hopkins Hospital it was found that he had again been stricken by a cerebral thrombosis affecting his speech center and for a time paralyzing his entire right side. He hovered for days at the threshold of



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death; then, slowly, he began to improve. The disability in his right side eased gradually, and, after a month and a half of extensive treatment, left his arm and leg completely. But his speech center remained affected, and he could neither write nor read. Since boyhood his life had been built around the reading of the written word and the expression of his reflections. Now everything which had given meaning to his existence was gone.

The burden of caring for him—and it was to be a heavy one—fell on his unmarried younger brother August, a retired engineer who looked and sounded uncannily like him, and with whom he shared the Hollins Street house. After Mencken's fifth week of hospitalization, August brought the old man home. His condition was appalling. In conversation he tried again and again to summon the right word, and failed. Sometimes he would resort to pantomime, raising an imaginary cup to his lips when he could not recall the word for drinking. Other times he would try circumlocutions, saying "the thing you cut with," for example, when he meant "scissors." And occasionally nonsense words came forth: "yarb" for "yard," "ray" for "rain," "scoot" for "coat," and so forth.

It was a bitter blow for the author of *The American Language*, and the worst of it was that he was fully aware of what was happening, understood the extent of the brain damage, and knew that his aphasia was incurable. When he was in the Hopkins Hospital he had threatened to kill himself, but for all his thundering prose he had never been, and was not now, capable of violence. What actually happened was that he sank into a dreadful depression. He would stand at his study window, looking at Union Square, on the opposite side of Hollins Street, saying almost inaudibly, "I wish this hideous existence would stop"; saying, "How can anyone so stupid live?"; saying, "That a man like me, able to produce something, with the drive I had. . . . It's comic; it's just comic." In that first year of his disability, he refused to allow anyone to read to him, refused to look at magazines with enlarged print, and wouldn't even listen to phonograph records. In one of his few remaining flashes of humor he told me hoarsely, "When I get to Heaven, I'm going to speak to God very sharply."

Each time I called at his home I thought it was the last time, but he lingered and lingered. The 1940s became the 1950s; my biography, *Disturber of the Peace*, was published (in an act of conspicuous gallantry, he had managed to initial his approval of every quotation from his correspondence); and still his agony continued undiminished. Late in 1951, he suffered a massive heart attack. Again the Hopkins put him on the critical list, but after five months in the hospital he was released once more. August asked me to lend a hand, and together we brought his brother back to Hollins Street.

During the next two years I rarely saw the Menckens, for I was moving up at the *Sun*, which meant assignments farther and farther from home. The ultimate outpost, for me, was New Delhi. After the better part of a year as the paper's Indian correspondent, I returned to Baltimore, and I had just finished covering the Army-McCarthy hearings when August told me that his brother's mood had changed slightly. He was now willing to be read to. Did I know anyone who could spend mornings as his companion? I hesitated for a moment. By then love had died between me and the *Sun*, so I answered August: "Yes. Me."

In those twilight years, Mencken's day began at 8 A.M., when Renshaw, a hospital orderly, arrived at the house after an all-night shift in the Johns Hopkins accident room. "Rancho," as the old man always called him, gave him a rub-down in his third-floor bedroom, helped him wash and dress, and entertained him with vivid stories of cases he had seen during the night. Meanwhile August was preparing his brother's breakfast downstairs—fruit juice, two soft-boiled eggs, and a slice of bread. Mencken ate this in his second-floor study, swiveling his chair around to the window so he could watch elementary school pupils trooping to school while he drank his coffee.

Children had become dear to him: unlike their parents, they were natural in his presence, unembarrassed by his condition. He enjoyed trips to the barber because he could admire a kindergarten class playing across the street while his hair was being cut, and two small boys who saw him almost every day were five-year-old Butch, who lived in the house next to his, and Alvin, a six-year-old Negro from down the street. Mencken would stroke Butch's rather emaciated little dog (all pets looked starved on Hollins Street; since Mencken's childhood the neighborhood had gone downhill and was, his own home apart, virtually a slum) and congratulate Alvin on the racing speed of his pet turtle. Emma, the Menckens' cook, nearly always had cookies for the boys. And each Christmas the old man distributed huge sacks of candy to all the children who were living around Union Square.

After breakfast Mrs. Lohrfinck came in, and together they went through the morning mail. Painful though all communication had become for him, he insisted that everyone who wrote him receive some sort of answer. Then she would ruffle through miscellaneous notes in his files, reading them to him, and he would make a simple editorial judgment over the suitability of each. (The resulting collection was published, four months after his death, as *Minority Report*.) At ten o'clock she left. Her employer accompanied her down to the front door. Then, unless the weather was impossible, he turned, trudged

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through the house, took his cap from a peg in the dining room, and went outside.

For Mencken admirers, the geography of the back yard at 1524 Hollins Street is often clearer than scenes from their childhood. To the left, as you came out the kitchen door, stood a high brick wall which he had begun building after World War I. In it were set various tiles, with a concrete replica of Beethoven's life mask and the first five bars of his Fifth Symphony at the far end. To the right of the back gate was a green and white shed which had sheltered Mencken's pony when he was a boy, and which now housed August's tools. In warm seasons morning glories blossomed over the shed, raising their lovely green fingers against the West Baltimore sky. Beside the shed, sloping toward the house, was a workbench, and a woodpile splashed with outrageously bright colors. Nearby stood a child's wagon: an unsuccessful thief had left it behind one night, and it too was splotched with purples, yellows, greens, and reds. Between these giddy hues and the kitchen was a brick terrace over which, on sunny mornings, the devoted August would hoist an awning. He would work at the bench, puffing a pipe and glancing up at the sky from time to time while his brother sat on a canvas chair, his hands lying in his lap like weapons put to rest.

When the noon whistle blew, they re-entered the house and Emma prepared lunch. Afterward they sat in the yard again until the children returned from school. Mencken then napped, and after an early supper they drank two martinis and retired. Often friends joined them for the evening cocktails. August controlled the social calendar. He excluded those whom he thought might upset the old man and everyone he regarded as trivial—which, August being a misogynist, included all women except Blanche Knopf. The most frequent visitors were Louis Cheslock, Dr. Arnold Rich, Hamilton Owens of the *Sun*, and me.

Starting in June of 1954, I arrived each morning as Mrs. Lohrfinck was leaving. Our sessions always began with the *Sun*. If it was the hay fever season, we started with the report of the pollen count. Otherwise, as I leafed through the paper, he would ask, "Well, what's been happening? Any good stuff there, anything rich? Any murders or rapes? Any robberies?" Complex events were beyond him now, so we settled for small calamities.

Apart from the reading, there was no fixed schedule for our mornings, but certain patterns recurred. Twice a week, after we had left the kitchen to Emma and settled in the yard beneath the gaudy awning, we would hear the distant clatter of garbage can lids. "Aha!" Mencken would breathe, brightening visibly; "here come the professors!"

Watching the trash men empty his own cans—each of which was gaily painted "1524 Hollins Street" in red and yellow—he would remark, "You know, they do that very well. The professors are really very elegant men." Now and then visitors came to the front door. They rarely saw him. He ordered William Randolph Hearst turned away, and shook his head when I suggested that John Dos Passos come in from the York Road and visit him. He still had his pride; he didn't want strangers or slight acquaintances to see him in this condition.

Often he was uncomfortable even with August and me. His aphasia came and went. When it was bad, he couldn't remember simple words or terms. He always recalled his brother's name, but there were times when he couldn't think of Mrs. Lohrfinck's, Emma's, Rancho's, or mine, and he despaired. Those sessions were grim for all of us, most of all for him. At his best, however, he was very like his old self. He described with gusto his vasectomy at Johns Hopkins when he was younger, and the fecund woman in New York who had voluntarily tested the success of the operation from time to time over the next year. To him all women were either ladies, to be treated with elaborate chivalry, or sex objects. There was no third category. He was particularly hard on female journalists. He would dismiss them with a snort or a few corrosive phrases. ("God, what an elephant," he said of one. "She makes you want to burn every bed in the world.")

After reading and talking we would sit a while watching August wield his bright paintbrush, dabbing it dry from time to time on the outside of the woodpile. "Isn't that gorgeous work my brother's doing?" the old man would say. But he rarely sat idle through an entire session. He had to be doing something; even make-work was preferable to no work at all. Heaving up from his canvas chair, he would drop to his knees among the shrubs, stripping leaves from fallen branches for his compost heap and binding the twigs into fagots for the fireplace. On hot days he would periodically mutter, "Here, I'd better quit this or I'll fall to pieces, this is knocking me out." But after an interval he would start groping among the bushes again.

Our most strenuous activity—I shared in it—was adding to the woodpile. On bitter days his fireplace was his chief solace. Cutting wood for it, and burning the wood, gave him extraordinary pleasure; it appealed, he said, to the boyhood love of vandalism which lingered in every man. The gathering of the fuel was as important to him as feeding it to the flames. His friends ordered seasoned cords over the phone. In his view it was far nobler to scavenge neighborhood alleys and saw up the loot.

Rising from his chair, he would say to me, "Let's see what we can find outside. You can't tell—we might turn up something really superb." Strolling down the narrow lanes with the child's

IBM Reports

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wagon and poking among the trash cans, we would uncover a variety of burnable junk—piano stools, fence posts, broom handles, discarded chairs, hat racks, broken coffee tables. If I spotted a particularly hideous specimen of Grand Rapids golden oak, he would gape and say, "Wow! *Look* at that, will you!" As we returned from patrol, he would call ahead, "August, he's found something really rich. Isn't that beautiful? It's simply exquisite." Then a shade of comic doubt would cross his ruddy face. He would ask us gravely, "But don't you think it's a shame to burn a lovely piece like that?" After deliberation, his brother would say, "It's a shame, all right, Harry, but we've got a long winter ahead." "It seems hard," the old man would say worriedly, and August would make a great show of winning him over by promising to save it for a very special occasion. This was the quintessential Mencken, clothing the preposterous in the robes of high seriousness. A passing stranger would have taken him literally, and he would have been in good company; Mencken had misled humorless critics thus for a half-century.

As the noon whistle sounded, he would methodically measure the wood sawn. "Say, we got a lot of work done today," he would say, standing back and admiring the stack. "Look how high that pile is now." As winter deepened, the stack shrank again, for unless there was a thaw, the brothers laid a fire every night. Evenings when I dropped in to listen to their growing collection of LP classics, the three of us would stare into the vivid coals. Like everything else about Mencken, his fires were unique. Their colors ranged all over the spectrum, for he cherished a hoard of chemically treated wood which, when ignited, matched the rainbow. I never learned to share his taste for after-dinner martinis, but I was tremendously impressed by those spectacular flames, and I said so.

When summer of 1955 arrived, I said my last good-bye at Hollins Street. I was leaving Baltimore for New England, and had found a Hopkins graduate student who would come in mornings and read the paper to Mencken. It was a wrench for me; he obviously didn't want me to go, and at first he said so vehemently. That evening, August reminded him that I had my own writing to do, and the next morning the old man had swung around completely; he offered his congratulations and said he expected me to write some swell books. His generosity, and his pretense that he had changed his mind, were typical of him. I have never known a public figure who was so different from his reputation. His readers thought of him as bigoted, cantankerous, wrathful, and rude, but he was none of those things. He was the elderly friend of Butch and Alvin. He was the cripple who was solicitous

about his brother's health. He was the stricken man who forced himself to initial the pages of my first manuscript, who always asked me in raw weather whether I was properly clad; who, when he was in the depths of his worst depressions, would excuse himself and retire to his bedroom because he didn't want to burden me with his troubles.

We both knew we would never meet again, for all our talk of reunions. He was failing rapidly now. Yet he rallied gallantly that last afternoon, and as I turned to leave through the vestibule he struck a pose, one foot in front of the other, one hand on the banister and the other, fisted, on his hip. "You know, I had a superb time while it lasted," he said in that inimitable voice. "Very soon it will stop, and I will go straight to Heaven. Won't that be exquisite? It will be very high-toned."

We shook hands; he trudged up the stairs into shadow, and I departed carrying two farewell gifts, an Uncle Willie stogie and a piece of the treated firewood. Seven months later an Associated Press reporter called me in Connecticut to tell me that Mencken had died in his sleep. His ashes were deposited in Baltimore's Loudon Park Cemetery. Long afterward I read of his brother's death, and later, word reached me that the Hollins Street house ("as much a part of me as my two hands," Mencken had once said of it) was now occupied by the University of Maryland's School of Social Work. That evening I carefully laid the piece of treated firewood in my own fireplace. I didn't expect much; after all that time, I thought, the chemicals would have lost their potency. But I was wrong. Instantly a bright blue flame sprang up. Blue changed to crimson, and after a few minutes there was another change. It was eerie. From end to end the wood blazed up in a deep green which would have been familiar to anyone who had ever held a copy of *The American Mercury*.

Fleeting, I thought: *If only The Mercury were still being published! And: If only he were still alive!* I remembered him lamenting the fact that there was no decent memorial service for non-believers. This little fire, I realized, was the closest I would ever come to one for him. Now his home had become the headquarters for a profession he had ridiculed. Miller Brothers' eating house, where we had drained steins of pilsner, was being torn down; the name of the restaurant lived on ignominiously in a sterile new Hilton Hotel. The Baltimore which delighted Mencken as a young reporter, when, he wrote, "the days chased one another like kittens chasing their tails," was swiftly vanishing, as the flames on my andirons were vanishing; soon the Baltimore I had known would disappear, too. Briefly I was near tears. And then I checked myself. I realized what Mencken's reaction to the maudlin fireside scene would have been. He would have split it into sentimental flinders with one vast, gravelly chuckle. □

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Every two weeks, NEW TIMES comes along with a stick or two of dynamite in its fist.

There was our story on "The Ten Dumbest Congressmen," with NEW TIMES' nomination for King of Dumb. You should have heard the screams on that one, including a well-attended press conference called by the King himself. There was "The CIA and the Mafia" concerning the inevitability with which gentlemen who wished to be killers gravitated to killers who wished to be gentlemen. There was our "Rendezvous with Abbie Hoffman"—a trip on the underground railroad that really caused an uproar.

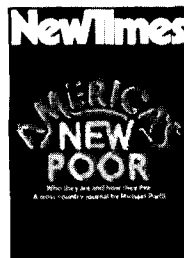
In "The Greatest Cover-Up of All" we looked at the new evidence in the JFK assassination and concluded it was a conspiracy. In "Under Control," we got inside Silva Mind Control. Is it just the latest psy-

to look inside other people's bodies? In "The Divine Recline of Miss M" we sought an answer to that heavy question—Has Bette Midler shot her bolt? In "The Prisons of Our Freedom," we visited a nightmare called Camp Pendleton where a lot of South Vietnamese were starting to ask, "When can we go home?"

"Women Who Murder" showed how male sexist attitudes can work to the benefit of women—especially if they shoot or stab somebody. "Not with a Bang but with a Psst" asked what's being done about those killer aerosol cans. Answer? Absolutely nothing. "Selling the Black Vote" made a lot of blacks and whites mad with its unblinking look at some new ethnic hustlers. "Victims of a Desperate Age" examined evidence that the Rosenbergs could have been framed. "Prisoners of Psychotherapy" was the last word on escaping from your analyst.

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NewTimes

LIFE & LETTERS

THE PETTIFOG HOUSE:

A Bicentennial Tour
by Andrew Ward



Welcome to the Captain Ephraim Pettifog House. Before we go in, let us pause here on the puckery and consider the early life of the man whose home we have come to visit.

Captain Pettifog was descended from a family of gimcracks who first came to this country in 1658 to escape the oak wilt which was then ravaging their native Wales. The family settled in Windfall, and here, on Ember Friday, 1745, Ephraim was born. "So Faire is hee," his father wrote that night in his day-book, "that Hee woulde make the Hoodwink swoon."

Ephraim would inherit his father's way with words, and early on showed signs he was cut out for higher things than gimcrackery. One of the few Pettifog childhood anecdotes which has filtered down to us has Ephraim parboiling some jackdaw while his father labored in the mill. "Isn't that jackdaw cooked yet?" his mother called from the hutch. "Not yet," Ephraim replied. "It's still curdy."

At nineteen, Ephraim ran away from home and took a job as a grip on the trading scudder *Goodernatch*. Four days out of Boston, the carboy succumbed to the flicker and Ephraim took on his duties—keeping tabs and sponging down the offal. Over the next few years Ephraim rapidly rose in station until, on Maytide, 1768, he became the company's youngest captain. His spiff, the *Albacore*, was, as a contemporary chronicler described it, "Fleete as a Foote," and took Ephraim far from his humble beginnings. In West Africa he befriended tribal chieftains and, in return for their kindnesses, brought numerous of their subjects back with him

for education and uplift in America's sunny southern colonies.

Captain Pettifog's reputation grew as his wares swept the colonies—from hand-latticed curvets to portable cucking stools from the bustling island of Japan. Having thus accrued considerable wealth, he took a wife, one Henna Scardapane, of the Vermont Scardapanes. "Oh, Mother, ye woulde Love her!" Ephraim wrote of his bride-to-be. "What oil cakes! What nates!"

Which brings us, at last, to the house itself. Built by Ephraim for his new wife in 1772, it is, as you can see, a classic of its period. From quoin to nooky we have endeavored to maintain the house just as it might have been when the Pettifogs resided here. The wings, of course, housing our gift shop, snack bar, and informative ticket office, are new additions, though they were built according to eighteenth-century carpenters' specifications by our own Rozzo Brothers Construction Company.

Let's go in, shall we?

Here in the main sequester, guests would arrive in their finest faddle and pantywaist for the balls and banquets for which the Pettifog House was justly famed. Let me just switch on the tape here. There we are.

The polka you are hearing was one of the Captain's favorites, and local musicians, perched topbeam along the canniken, played it whenever the Captain took to the floor. For most of the week, this room, with its silken balderdash and ornately tucked bedplates, went largely unused. But when ball and banquet time came around, the room was the center of gay and boisterous festivity.

Here on this drop-leaf beggary guests would snack on backslap and outdates, hefty slices of beefwood garnished with finely chopped swit, all washed down with steaming beakers of hubbub. Makes your mouth water, doesn't it?

I'll bet a lot of you have a picture of your colonial forebears as stern old stiff, but believe me, they knew how to have a good time. They played such parlor games as Catch-As-Catch-Can and Trip-the-Gimp, gathered around this double-fretted payola to sing "What Say the Fipple Flute," and "Take Up the Slack, Mona," and danced the sedate woebegone, the daring piggyback, and the outlandish barramunda.

Now, mind your heads as we go into the kitchen. Remember, the average man's height in the eighteenth century was only four-foot-two.

The kitchen was the true center of the colonial household. Here the day would begin. Henna would arise at one in the morning to begin the breakfast preparations as the menfolk stalked out to do their chores. A daughter would stoke the barbells and gather pinspots for the hearth while sons fed the livestock and dragged postholes through the acreage. If there was any Indian fighting to be done, everyone would try to get it out of the way before the breakfast boom was sounded. Then the family would stand around this signed Heckinlively and feast on bowls of postpone, dapple, and miniken pie.

Incidentally, beneath where you're standing is the hidden Indian stairway we discovered while restoring the house. Nearby we have found artifacts left by the Indians who hid here, off and on, until central heating was installed in 1953.

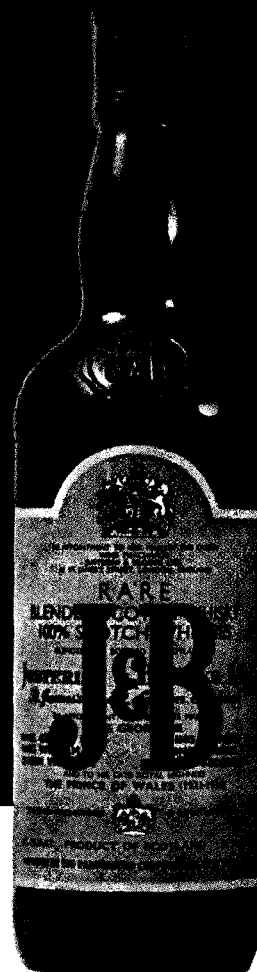
The colonial housewife did everything over the kitchen hearth: it served her as cooking stove, baking oven, candle dip, die cast, privy, trash compactor, and pop-up toaster. Of course, she lacked the modern conveniences we take for granted today—Cling Free, Spray 'n' Vac—but she did have a few gadgets handy which cut her work time down.

I bet none of you know what this is. Any guesses? No, it's a buckelpitter. See? Couldn't you kick yourselves? You'd put your buckle here, like so, on the prong, turn the crank, and the little blade would snap against it, chucking the pits from your buckles. Over here is another ingenious little invention we would do well to revive. That's right, it's a quacksalver. You'd take your leav-

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ATLANTIC-LITTLE, BROWN

ings, rinds, girt, what-have-you, dump them down the flout, heat, pull the lever, and out would come your week's supply of sackbut.

One more item I wouldn't want you to pass by—the bathbrick. Looks simple enough, doesn't it? Like an ordinary brick? Well, never sell the bathbrick short. It had a wide range of uses, from crushing puffballs for winter storage to weighing down milady's mobcap.

Now, if you'll just follow me up here to the Captain's library. Here Captain Pettifog could shut himself away from the petty concerns of the household and feast on the works of Brit, Hume, Gold, and Fizzdale. It was here he met with the Bullymuckers to write his famous Landfill Compact, which proposed rec-

pers, the hand-nudged gloss of its overcoating, the Greek Revival underlap of its emphatically fluted knouts.

The house, by the way, contains not a single nail. Nails, as you know, were not mass produced in the eighteenth century, and it took teams of blacksmiths many weeks to produce one. The house is entirely constructed of roasted chestnut and pushpins, which accounts, I think, for its remarkable durability.

And now the last and, for me, most poignant room in the Pettifog House—the widow's walk. Are we all going to fit?

From here, Henna would watch for the *Albacore's* sails to appear, heralding her husband's return. Sadly, since the house stands some thirty miles inland,



reational zoning as a means of ridding the colonies of the hated British. Unfortunately, owing to insufficient postage, the Compact never reached the Continental Congress, and the cause would never benefit fully from the Captain's wise counsel.

Down the hall here is the Captain's bedroom, where he and Henna, upon this prow-shaped bed, were to conceive over thirty-seven children, thirty-four of whom were to perish in infancy from swamp pox, wrist blight, and the sting of the barfly. Over the bed hangs a portrait of Henna's father, the Reverend Root Scardapane, painted by Mosely during one of his frequent blue periods. The rod hanging over the window is a clodpoll, with which the captain could reach down and awaken slumbering sluffers and potluckies in the fields.

The chest here is not original with the house, but from its pugmarkings we have been able to ascertain that it is of the general style, region, and period of Captain Pettifog. Note the flayed clap-

Henna never once caught sight of a ship, and eventually died—it is said—of a broken heart, on Mooncleft Eve, 1804, while her husband cruised the Winnebagoes gathering kinksleeve for the nation's cupboards.

Years later, at a community bleed, Captain Pettifog—patriot, adventurer, and prolific penster to the end—succumbed to a bout of the killjoy. In a ceremony befitting his position and accomplishments, Captain Pettifog was buried in his uniform beside his wife, beneath the snack bar.

This concludes our tour of the Captain Ephraim Pettifog House. We hope you've enjoyed this little journey into our nation's storied past. To exit, just follow the arrows and depart through the powdery to the gift shop, where I urge you to pick up a few of our Pettifog House mementos—clodpoll swizzle sticks, Landfill Compact placemats, and our own factory-fresh pinkroot preserves.

Thanks for coming.

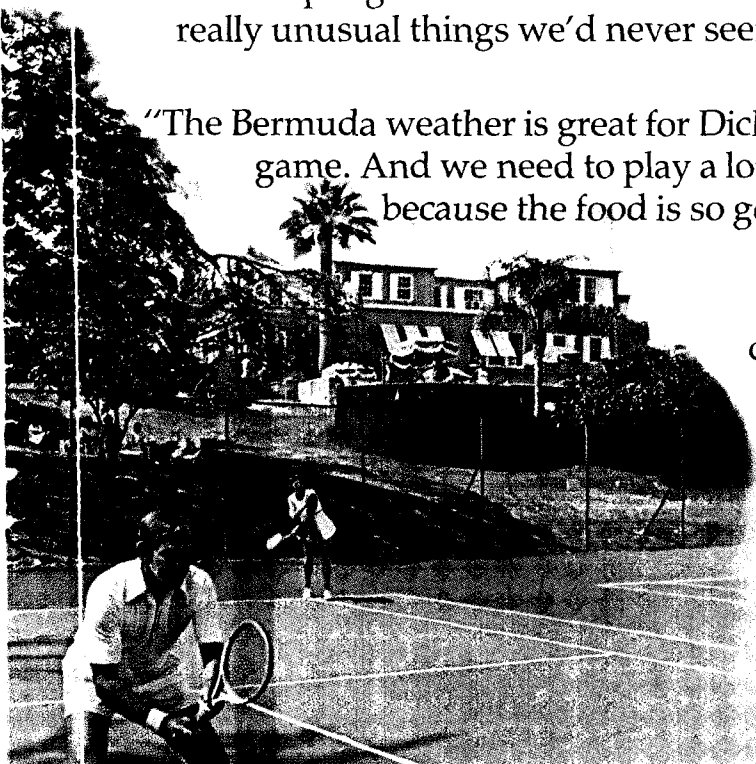


"We like to explore on the motorbikes.
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Adria Miner on the Miners' third visit to Bermuda.

"We went antiquing in Hamilton and found some
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"We like to play
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APPLE & BEECH, BIRCH & OAK

by Frank Rowsome, Jr.

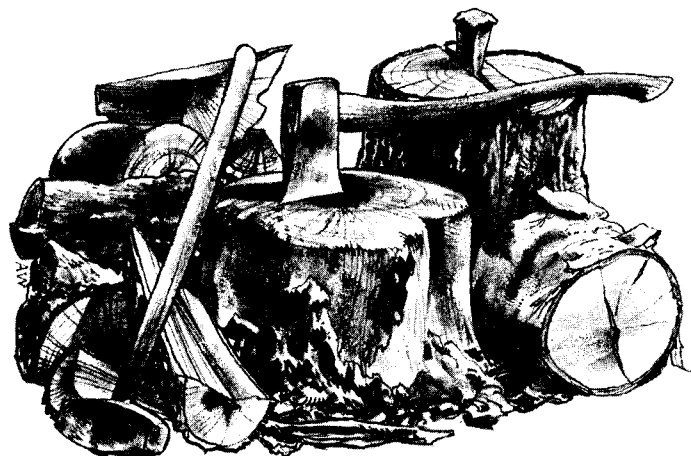
WOODCUTTING is full of sensuous and kinesthetic rewards. There is the rhythmic *thock* of the ax, with every second stroke freeing flat-spinning chips of yellowish wood. The special alertness of felling builds up during preliminary notching cuts and rises to a breathless moment when the treetop loses the symmetry of its sway, hovers against the sky for a moment, and then sweeps over with fierce cracking as the trunk thunders to the ground with branches thrashing. When limbs are cut free with diagonal-slicing ax strokes, the ellipses of fresh-cut wood gleam against the bark in the soft forest light. As wood is bucked into portable lengths, measured multiples of what your fireplace accepts, the saw generates little conical hills of cuttings; coarser than carpentry sawdust, these tiny cubes of pale damp wood creep into boot tops and pockets. When wood is split in the yard by the woodshed there comes a time when a husky billet of hardwood, almost too big and cross-grained to be ax-splittable, nevertheless responds to a precise blow by dropping apart in two even pieces, their inner faces moist and fragrant at this first exposure to light and air. Toward dusk there is an enjoyably tired feeling as the day's yield is stacked for seasoning, the wedge-sectioned pieces fitted evenly, like a carefully built stone wall. Only stovewood is allowed to remain in a tumbled heap.

Getting in your own firewood has much to recommend it, if not done of necessity. Felling, limbing, bucking, and splitting are the four basic steps in the process, none difficult to bring off pas-

sably, and yet none so simple that your technique cannot be bettered. Prodigious exertions are not called for, although it is somewhat more strenuous than golf or other conventional absorbents of leisure. It is work that is likely to blister the hands or crick the back unless undertaken along a gentle slope of habituation.

You can do a considerable amount of creative resting in the woods, seated on a log, absently rubbing tired muscles, studying the intricate topography of bark, reading the now-ended calendar of tree rings, smelling the fresh woody fragrances, watching the chipmunk or bluejay come closer to scout the meaning of your silence. Almost alone among outdoor pursuits, woodcutting is unaffected by weather, and can be engaged in at all times except drenching cold rain or driving sleet (it is quite magical during a snowstorm). You automatically work at a tempo attuned to the temperature, easily enough to keep from steaming on a golden day in Indian summer, briskly enough to keep comfortable when north winds icily rake the woods.

Unlike many leisure activities, woodcutting delivers a product in return for time and effort, a pile of beautiful, well-split hardwood, abounding in promise of bright fires radiating their magic on winter nights. The degree of satisfaction is curiously high. It is not altogether clear why a filled woodshed should be so reassuring, more so than shelves of cans and jars in the cupboard, or a freezer chest chock full of frosted parcels. Some shadowy motiva-



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tion is buried here, something to do with the peripheral rewards of possessions, with a need for making experience tangible and visible to others.

Perhaps a clue can be sensed by considering people whose leisure activities do *not* afford a product. If you observe the cameras carried in such profusion by returning travelers as they flow through customs weirs, it is possible to conclude that the profoundest need filled by vacation photography is documentation. Pictures, studied and shown about, function as a kind of certification of experience, and generally they don't bleach as fast as memory. Returning travelers carry, in addition to luggage and cameras, an extraordinary volume of gifts and bric-a-brac. From the balcony above the arrival pens at an international airport, a jetload of tourists tends to look as if most of them were victims of besetting generosity or compulsive connoisseurship. The scene suggests that possessions bought abroad and carried home have high value as confirmation of time well spent, proof less evanescent than airline tags left dangling and customs symbols chalked on luggage.

People appear to buy knickknacks for the oddest of motives, not the least of which is the conversation that can be casually constructed about them later. Evidently recollection is for many persons simply not sufficient, and a physical thing or image supplies welcome additional testimony.

As for the filled woodshed, it is true that few countrymen whip out a camera to document the achievement of several cords of beech, but it is noticeable that conspicuous supplies of firewood are frequently stacked in an open shed in no way concealed from those driving past. Firewood is after all not as inherently invisible as those parcels in the freezer, and a possession that is invisible is somehow slightly diminished.

Getting in firewood is a many-faceted activity, and not the least of its benefits is a sense of calm. You may stride off to the woods bearing, along with ax and saw, a well-nourished grievance; you are almost certain to return with, if you think of it at all, detached surprise that the matter could have been so troublesome. Woodcutting is a sovereign remedy for a churning mind, a specific for festering concern. It works its spell not so much by substitution (which is what skiing does, it being

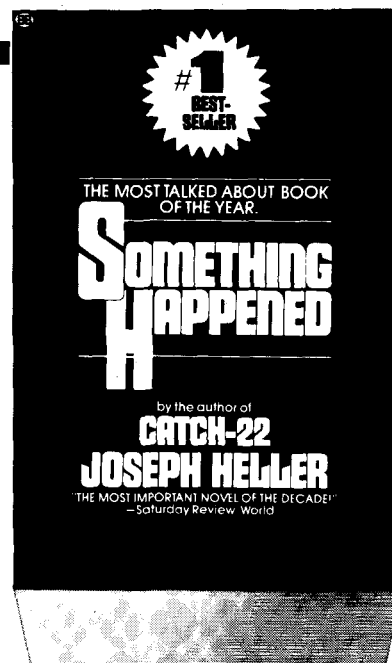
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—The New Republic

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—Boston Globe

PRIDE OF THE BIMBOS

John Sayles



"Full of outlandish characters and outrageous situations, of quick wit and subtle depth... a remarkable first novel... *Pride of the Bimbos* is peopled with a sideshow softball team that plays in drag, its star player being a midget named Pogo Burns; a steely-eyed, superblack ex-pimp who is tracking Burns down to kill him; and assorted red-neck crackers and sleepytown darkies... The best description would be to say that if Fellini were an American he would've filmed *Pride of the Bimbos* years ago."—Houston Chronicle

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ATLANTIC-LITTLE, BROWN

difficult to cherish a grievance while hurtling downhill in continuous alarm over narrowly averted catastrophe) as by the more subtle method of transference. Using an ax or splitting sledge is of course a form of sanctioned violence, and it takes only a half-hour's tussle with some mulish hickory to mop up any likely supply of hostility. This is nothing so simple as venting one's spleen on poor, harmless trees: it is instead a kind of cancellation, perhaps a physiologic process related to the sensations of using the large muscles.

Woodcutting also provides a second form of psychotherapy by presenting a series of small, engrossing, and delightfully soluble problems. A tree is felled exactly where it is supposed to fall, despite a slight lean in another direction; threatened pinching of the saw kerf is avoided by reordering the natural sequence of bucking cuts; an unsplittably gnarled crotch is finessed by relocation of fireplace lengths. It is not necessary to pretend that these are substantial achievements, nor anything more than routine to a woodsman; it is just that the successful solution of random problems, however small, is tonic to the spirits. Certainly it could not have been by chance that Wilhelm II, the last of the German emperors, his restlessly proud and never very stable mind corroded by an awareness of a world war disastrously lost, spent time each exiled day in woodcutting. But it is not necessary to have the Marne, and Verdun, and the utter ruin of an empire on your mind to find reliable serenity in the woodlot.

Of course it doesn't always go well. Sometimes a tree chosen for cutting because it looks peckish, no longer a sturdy member of its company, falls with a distinctively hollow thump and shatters, revealing a punky interior so far gone in corruption as to be worth no more work. (A fireplace fire is contemptuous of punky wood, burning it sullenly, as a reluctant duty.) Occasionally the felling goes awry, from miscalculation of lean or veering of the wind during the wavery moment when a tree has concluded to fall but has not yet fixed on direction. It may maliciously slant off course and lodge, half fallen, propped by the upper branches of a neighboring tree. This is a woodcutter's embarrassment, impossible to explain to anyone who happens by as something intended, and impossible to abandon, being a deadfall peril. If it cannot be jounced free, the choice is either to fell

the second tree too, or to dislodge the hang-up by rolling it or by using a log chain to drag the butt out until the top breaks free. The work is arduous, a little dangerous, and thoroughly frustrating.

On those infrequent days when malign spirits flit through the woods to perch on branches nearby, all woodcutting can grow cranky. With each

bucking cut the trunk rolls to new positions of inconvenience, and the saw binds inexplicably, and the ax glances wickedly, and the footing is precarious while you are trudging with a heavy four-length log on your shoulder. It is prudent to gather your tools and depart on such a day. Don't even stop to split what's been cut: the first piece will simply swallow three wedges, and smile.

CULTURE WATCH

by Benjamin DeMott

Riverrun

For a week or so after the midsummer rain and floods in the Northeast, the rapids on the Housatonic between two Connecticut towns, Falls Village and Kent, were negotiable—rare event in that season. My son the sophomore, my wife, I, and another couple drove down from the Massachusetts Berkshires one chill, brilliant, high-vaulted July Sunday dawn, rented canoes from Riverrun Outfitters, rapped a bit with the boatmen about which approach to take to the covered bridge a few miles downstream, and launched our run.

Looked at from the James Dickey & *Deliverance* perspective, this effete eastern mode of thrill-seeking is tame stuff. Riverrun Co., branches in Colorado and elsewhere, supplies the intrepid not just with canoes (kayaks or rubber rafts, your choice) and lifejackets, but with good dope about difficulties ahead (where the rapids shift from Class I to II or III), reminders about hidden rocks

and about how to judge where you are, after West Cornwall, in relation to Bitchy Ledge. What's more, Riverrun fixes it so that once you pull in at Housatonic Meadows, Kent, or wherever—having zipped along, part of the way, through the closest thing to a Wilderness experience left in southern New England—a phone call brings a van and trailer to haul you and your craft (no sweat) back to your car. The general organizational élan of the thing never before troubled me, and we had a hell of a run that day, especially under the covered bridge, flying up out of the shade into a flashing canyon, bamm-ing down, soaked and rubber-kneed, whacked around in wild white water, yet no overboards or overturns. But on the way back . . .

Coming round a bend on the river road in the van, we spied a kayak chap surfing—lovely sight. This skinny, glistening red twig, skidding *upstream* at a crazy pace, stuck and held one instant, then tearing up over the crests, blades bright, riding back currents in the tips of waves, a sensation you could practically feel even watching a hundred yards off, in a car. Sisyphean strain, long swooping glide . . . beautiful.

The kayak disappears. Immediately our van pulls off, our driver's out in the road, racing across the bluff. An accident? disaster? Everybody's craning out for word, and then I see a kayak going up on the trailer behind us. There's a breathless bearded guy, soaked through, banging on the van door—the kayak chap. The doctor beside me moves over to give the kid room and looks at him a minute.

"This your pickup point? That was pre-arranged?"

"Yup," says the dripping kid, grinning at the logistic neatness of things. "What's wrong with that?"



Superflick

Nashville, the movie about the country music scene down south, looks like becoming a cultural episode, an event on the order of Woodstock, *Hair*, or the birth of streaking, about which all at once everybody on earth decides to gabble. It took off overnight from the entertainment sections to the Op-Ed page. Senator McGovern said that it "looked into the soul of our country . . . the poignant condition of our lives in the Seventies." Tom Wicker liked the portrait of "the American mobility culture, with its autos obsolete and crunchable the day they're sold, its fast food parlors, plastic motel rooms, take-out orders, transient sex and junk music . . ." And before the box office ever opened, *Nashville* generated controversy. Pauline Kael broke a release date to cheer the show in *The New Yorker*, making other journals natter about breaches of reviewerly ethics. A week after the official opening, a music writer on the *New York Times* wrote slightly (and pretty justly) about *Nashville*'s songs, triggering another media explosion—a new set of reviews done by a corps of music specialists.

People have quarreled in print about whether the flick is a mini-Bicentennial or an attempt to kill off the birthday party before it starts. They've quarreled about critical vocabulary. *Rolling Stone* seemed to praise the movie's director, Robert Altman, for being undisciplined, whereupon the Boston *Phoenix* shot back that Altman was "the most disciplined director working today," and *The Nation* came in to arbitrate. (*The Nation*'s notion was that *Nashville* was "perfectly disciplined chaos.") And while the Tom Wicker thesis that *Nashville* was Nashville for real, that the film did indeed reproduce America, had plenty of backing, plenty of dissenters spoke too. George Will, columnist on the right, said the movie wasn't even "a close approximation" of America. Robert Mazzocco, in the *New York Review of Books*, said the locale reminded him of Los Angeles. Not even the director's formula, passed on to a zillion interviewers, that *Nashville* was a "metaphor for America," put an end to the flap.

Controversy, murmur the flacks, money-money. I doubt, though, that it's "just" controversy, or, for that matter, "just" straight entertainment values, that account for this box office triumph. *Nashville* has several good jokes about Country and Western cupidity, one

first-rate ballad in a manner close to early Bob Dylan ("I'm Easy," sung astutely by Keith Carradine, who wrote it), fragments of superb gospel singing by a Fisk University choir, and many extraordinarily evocative images. (No face I've seen has expressed so profound yet uncomplaining a certainty that music cannot surprise as that of the red-headed, middle-aged, studio guitarist who strums unchanging C&W changes at the recording sessions in this film.)

But *Nashville* also has other dimensions. It places some standard-brand, post-Marxist, culture-critical bleats about the U.S. in an air nobody could have guessed they'd ever breathe—the

housewife accepts the advances of a rock singer, a housewife rejects the advances of a rock singer, a father declines to learn the sign language used by his deaf son and daughter, a talentless hopeful is humiliated for her fantasies, yet refuses to shed them—but nowhere are you burdened with accounts of motivations, or any other trapping of the homely universe of cause and effect.

Chris Hodenfield, a *Rolling Stone* writer who loved the movie, pointed out links between Robert Altman and Kurt Vonnegut (personal friendship, agreement to collaborate on a film version of one of Vonnegut's



Robert Altman

air of the Hollywood musical, by tradition the most beamish and electric of cinematic forms. Chat about the venality of Our System, the corruption of Our Politics, the crudity of Our Popular Mind, the viciousness of Our Rage to Consume lost its bloom round about the time that the conventions of Hollywood musicals were themselves beginning to seem loony. But set that same culture crit to music, dress it up in production numbers with an eight-track sound system, segue with guitars from thin Marcuse to thin Slater to thin Roszak, and all at once the dread old alienation solemnities got rhythm—and a measure of freshness and surprise.

Then there's the ease of fit between contemporary attitudes about authority and *Nashville*'s attitude toward explanations. Not surprisingly, this movie is, from start to finish, a "no right answers" show; the audience never feels subservient to an explanation or an evaluation because no explanations are offered. An assassin shoots, a singing star has fainting fits and turns catatonic, a sensitive woman marries a slug, a

books) and quoted, as relevant to *Nashville*'s documentary approach, the passage in Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions* in which the novelist claims that only fools believe life has "significant details, insignificant details . . . lessons to be learned, tests to be passed. . . ." The movie's tone reminded me of Joan Didion's *Play It As It Lays*, a novel that mocks the idea of "knowledge of the heart." ("What makes Iago evil? some people ask. I never ask," the narrator says in the opening sentences, and goes on to assert that "nothing applies.") There's an edgy, half-brutal self-protectiveness in the movie's treatment of feeling that struck me in the end as mean-spirited. Characters who open themselves up to each other, even for a second, are treated as dumb. The occasional "unavoidable descents" into purity of feeling (grief at the death of a loved one) are invariably punished, or clotted with distorting irony. The actors themselves, at the moments of reversal when they're encouraged to turn enigmatic, to drop their roles as interpreters of life and seal themselves off

October Report on

Atlantic Monthly Press books



People often ask us about the relations between *The Atlantic* and its book-publishing arm, the Atlantic Monthly Press. The answer is not unlike explaining how you're related to your second cousin once removed, so we usually hand the questioner an explanatory pamphlet and change the subject to sex or politics.

The September *Atlantic* contained a searching article on Peking by Contributing Editor **ROSS TERRILL**, a section from his book **FLOWERS ON AN IRON TREE**, published this month by the Atlantic Monthly Press. John K. Fairbank has said of Terrill's book: "His you-are-there report on five major cities brings the reader as close to Chinese life as anyone from outside can get. A humane and friendly, easy-to-read book, but still incisively critical and provocative, like *800,000,000: The Real China*."

This month's *Atlantic*, as you can see for yourself, has in it a poignant story by **WARD JUST**. Last month the Atlantic Monthly Press published his novel **NICHOLSON AT LARGE**, of which Russell Baker has written: "For a long time now, Ward Just has been quietly writing the best fiction about Washington I have ever read. This latest is the best he's done yet. His sense of the complexities, nuances, and compromises that make Washington life unique is almost perfect." A Book-of-the-Month Club alternate.

We hope this explains itself—without pamphlets.

FLOWERS ON AN IRON TREE
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LITTLE, BROWN

from the audience, seem to feel the cut-off as pleasurable or releasing.

No, I'm not forgetting that I chuckled often watching this flick; I'm simply remembering that I felt surprisingly blackish afterward. The director's avowed aim was to bring you closer, through documentary techniques, to the grain of the people, and his famous sound track certainly does carry a richer hum and buzz, the kind of talk that doesn't know it's dialogue, much less that it's prose. But at the core of the experience there's a deep fear or scorn of feeling, and I hope it's not this that's made *Nashville* all the rage.

New course listing

"Psychokarate is now taught at a New York college, a course in the art of psychological weaponry against the assault of feeling"—Herbert Hendin, *The Age of Sensation* (Norton, \$8.85).

Liberty v. Equality

READ BOOKS NOT BUMPER STICKERS, says my neighbor's bumper. Reading Edgar Z. Friedenberg's *The Disposal of Liberty and Other Industrial Wastes* (Doubleday, \$7.95), just after seeing *Nashville*, I felt like pasting the words on my own heap. I don't mean to call the movie a bumper sticker, or to imply that, as a social commentator, Professor Friedenberg, author of *The Vanishing Adolescent*, is bare of faults. But he does have a clear and demanding subject—the rending contradictions within the hard-hat classes who are exploited from above yet prevented, by a kind of programmed fury at bearded radicals and welfare loafers, from achieving the political solidarities that might end their impotence. Beyond this he has significant targets (the puerility and greed of thoughtless egalitarian sentimentalists who assume "the masses" bear no responsibility for their political choices) and commitments (to the essential dignity of the elitist cause). Many a page could serve as a gloss for the electioneering interludes in *Nashville*, and one reason for praising the book is exactly that: the glosses are clearer than the movie images, inviting counterposition, qualification, refutation, examining their own fundamental assumptions, demanding the reader earn the right to differ by working a critical pen in the margins.

But it's the content, not the clarity, that counts. *The Disposal of Liberty* is

overcocky, wrongheaded in parts, not sufficiently reluctant about gunning down the softhearted in our midst. Its wisecrack comedy can be tasteless ("Even the author of *The Merchant of Venice* might have some difficulty composing *The Tragedy of Antony and Golda Meir*"). And while the argument owes much to Herbert Marcuse, the author has a far less subtle and elegant mind than his master. But Friedenberg's dearest cause, the preservation of space for the truly liberating feelings—generosity, openness, tolerance, enthusiasm—is admirable. And no less so is his adeptness at identifying and weighing up the punitive and envying motives that constrict American political life. A stimulating and entertaining polemic.

Inside the net

Enthusiasm was the initial note when, last month, I and sixteen other duly sworn citizens (thirteen women, three men) did our first three days' service in Washington as members of the President's Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs. (Our main job is to oversee and evaluate programs funded under the Women's Educational Equity Act for the purpose of creating new educational structures suited to women's special needs.) And while my conversational line when I came back was, predictably, antibureaucratic and unimpressed, as though no learning experience had occurred, I actually picked up a lot. The old rule applies: no substitute for a view from inside, even if you're miles from the top.

It's true, of course, that portions of what you learn—about how the government does its business, about the functions of the *Federal Register*, about budget procedures, job classification loopholes, departmental monitoring, and the like—are available to anyone up for a quiet read in the *Congressional Directory* and a few related source books. (I'm not sure where you'd go to learn that there are some three hundred or so Presidential Advisory Councils, ten of them in the Office of Education alone, or that the White House and many departments have fully staffed offices whose sole function is to shepherd councils into position to "advise.") It's also true that the language problem is vexing. (I'll be a long time learning to love phrases like "mainstreaming women's concerns," or "folding in our operational planning system," or "tracking our training activities," etc.)

But the lesson of consequence was of another kind altogether, having to do with the texture of bureaucratic life—its capacity to persuade you of your total expendability and of the sheer pointlessness of failing to observe, in every situation, the precise limits set for you by the System. Common usage makes much of the absence of spontaneity from bureaucratic scenes, and in describing the texture of such scenes this is a good place to start—but what matters is that the nonspontaneity sometimes threatens to cost you your life.

Our temporary staff and White House helpers had been dealing with us, our abstract putative selves, for months before we showed up in person. Owing to Office of Management and Budget requirements and other time line constraints, they'd prepared present budgets, future budgets, guidelines, evaluation procedures, heaven knows what else, before any of us so much as hit the FBI wire, with the result that there was inevitably a sense—it got itself expressed in a certain sadness or wanness of tone—that we ourselves, the warm bodies, were more or less . . . secondary.

What you are even more aware of than lack of spontaneity is the feeling of being carefully knitted into the web, securely fastened in a world of tough interdependencies, where each action is impacted almost before undertaken, wherein each movement or fluttering of intention is, ideally, savvy enough to hold in mind a thousand dense adjacencies.

We Council members were enthusiastic, as I say, about our having come into existence. The Education Commissioner came in and told us we were a "watershed moment." Caspar Weinberger (he hadn't yet quit) came in too, and said he was relying on the council "to keep us in touch with the real world." But the processes of our orientation were, inevitably, a schooling in how to stop worrying and learn to love being hemmed in. Explanations of our privileges and our rights—when we can lobby and when we can't, what we can evaluate, what we can't, where we can have an office, where we can't, whom we can hire, whom we can't—all carried the burden of steady alertness to the thick governmental surround. Once during our Washington stay, a House committee chairman undertook to whip up anger among his colleagues about HEW regulations calling for equal gym facilities for male and female students.

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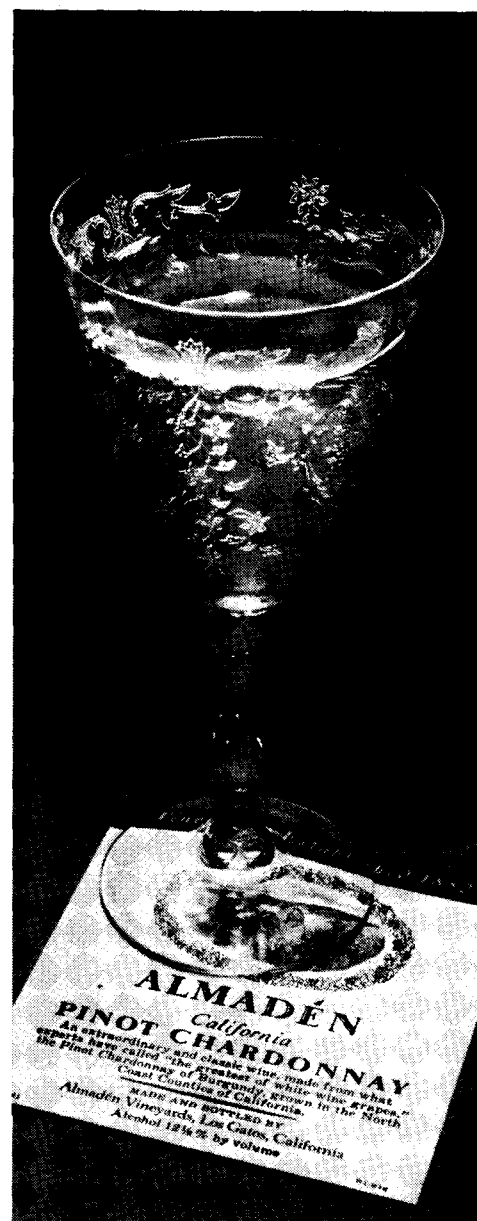
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Reading the *Washington Post* in the hotel room, I had a feeling for the fellow as a free agent, but once in our meeting again, the sense of containment returned: I understood that he too, this would-be maverick congressman, was one of us, caught in the web. Free-swingers, go home.

I'm prepared as the next person to concede that too long a residence in such air could cause harm. But it's nevertheless highly instructive to be reminded of what it feels like deep inside the System. Somewhat dry and abstract? Unbrightened by the light of fantasy? Well, I think yes, but also realistically preoccupied with the conditioned nature of things.

Clear the set

An underused campus in midsummer is a stage set, and if you hang around through the season you may find yourself at intervals *playing* prof. By which I mean that the undergraduate tour guide, if he happens to be a friend, will try to enliven his spiel, as he shows the place off to a subfreshman and his folks, by passing the word that there's one of his profs coming out of the libe. It's no problem unless you, the prof, are among the world's self-conscious, in which case . . . Myself, spying the campus guide, I regularly work at looking right. That tennis racquet in my hand—will it signify we're a country club? Maybe leaving my glasses on another minute will give off a good vibe—scholar still cudgeling his brain over faded medieval text back on the desk inside? Straighten overlong hair to counteract aging radical appearance? . . . Ridiculous, no doubt, but I've known people who've said they made up their minds for or against a college partly on the basis of the way somebody on campus answered a question about where to find the theater or gym. Am I hurting or helping our image?

The impossibility of knowing is yet another reason for feeling happy about the local onset of the real world—fall term looming near. In a week or so they will be here, the new students, the ones who don't any longer have to be sold. Their being on hand doesn't quite give you the white water sensation, simply a surge of legitimacy, of at least being better than a mere rent-a-prof prof. Acting, it turns out—even acting a teacher, when that's what in fact you are—is still the trickiest work in this world.

BOOKS•BOOKS•BOOKS

Realism, Madness, Drugs, and Demon Rum

“Whenever I hear someone use the word ‘reality’ I want to reach for a custard pie.” So wrote an eminent professor of English, George Stade, not long ago. And you know what he means. “Reality” is a suspect word—presumably because what it names does not exist. Which is the great lesson of modern culture.

This truth turns out to be uncomfortable when you have lost your car keys, your love, your health, your way, but that's another problem. The problem on my mind at the moment is that the death of reality makes life difficult for those writers who don't know the war is over, who continue to write books that insist on the truth of their world.

Things being what they are, relatively few “realistic” novelists can claim to be taken with full seriousness. One of them is Richard Yates, whose best book, *Revolutionary Road*, a gritty picture of marriage in the suburbs, was published in 1961. Since then he has published a book of short stories, *Eleven Kinds of Loneliness*, and a less successful novel, *A Special Providence*.

Yates's new novel, **DISTURBING THE PEACE** (Seymour Lawrence/Delacorte, \$7.95), takes on a special risk. It is not only realistic but it's realistic about a dangerous subject: madness, one of the essential modern themes used again and again as a device for revealing the multiplicity of experience, the hollowness of social convention. In *Disturbing the Peace*, madness is taken literally, a subject as real as flesh.

The novel follows the psychological descent of John Wilder, an advertising space salesman in his mid-thirties, prosperous, miserably married, and an alcoholic. It begins with a 100-page set piece that is as good as anything Yates has previously written, in which Wilder returns from a business trip, drunk and distraught, says he fears he's going to kill his wife and children, and is hauled off to Bellevue. Then he's thrown into the midst of a brilliantly rendered assortment of psychopaths and their eerie keepers.

Something goes a bit awry a third of the way through the book; trouble sets in with the appearance of a not quite credible girl whose “small nose bobs very slightly up and down at each syllable beginning with a *p*, *b*, or *m*. . . .” But this is the sort of novel that makes you feel faintly guilty when you describe it in terms of what part works and what part doesn't. Every page, flawed or not, bears the mark of comprehended pain.

The hero is a man incarcerated in a body whose “nerves are screaming”; he can't contain his emotions without the anesthesia of drink. Yates has a persuasive way with alcoholism. He dramatizes the alcoholic's double sense of exalted worth and worthlessness, his inward rage at the sober people around him, who seem to be immune from feeling. John Wilder seethes with contempt for the deadened nerve ends he imagines others to have, even as he murders his own nerves with bourbon.

Alcohol and the tranquilizers he recklessly washes down are the avenues for Wilder's movement into full-fledged lunacy, a messianic complex. Although this sometimes seems all too clinically perfect—Wilder at one point thinks he's Christ—I never doubt for a moment that Yates understands what it is like to



Richard Yates

step over the edge into dementia, as the voices appear ("He let go of the tree . . . and walked again, beginning to feel as if hundreds of needles were gently pricking his flesh. His vision was distorted too: colorless flecks danced before his eyes; and still the doggerel went on, as real as if someone . . . were whispering the words beside him . . ."). Yates makes you feel the horror of delusion and the pain of the long swim up from the bottom, back toward sanity, as in one of those multi-tiered dreams, when you think you've awakened but have not.

There are things wrong with this novel. Most important, Yates enacts all too well his hero's solipsism, and other figures in the book lack depth. But at its best, *Disturbing the Peace* reminds you of the considerable courage that can sometimes be found in unself-conscious art.

Glance at the opening pages of Mark Vonnegut's **THE EDEN EXPRESS** (Praeger, \$8.95) and you might set it aside as just another hippie's memoir of life in the long-ago 1960s. But you'd be wrong, and you would miss a remarkable book. Vonnegut, who is the son of Kurt Vonnegut, graduated from Swarthmore in 1969 and, like a lot of his well-educated contemporaries, he lit out for the countercultural life, a quest that took him to a remote abandoned farm in British Columbia, where he founded a commune. And where he went crazy. I don't use that word flippantly—I imitate the author, who uses it with care and respect. This book is a report on schizophrenia, by an insider.

At the start it seemed to Vonnegut that he had found a place that answered all his inner needs, and his life was an idyll. Most readers might not think so—constant mosquitoes, brown rice for supper, a wreck of a house to rebuild out of lumber that had to be fashioned by hand—but it was an escape from the "plastic" civilization he loathed, and it provided adversity and simplicity, two qualities his life had lacked.

But then came an abrupt emotional collapse. In retrospect, of course, it wasn't so abrupt. He writes ominously of his draft board physical, where he successfully "faked" insanity—except that partway through his act he realized he wasn't faking at all. There was a trip back home to the Northeast, which set him quaking within and made

him pathologically rude to others. Back at the farm, though, these symptoms could be explained, even glorified, as a sane response to an insane society. Vonnegut was then much influenced by the theories of Thomas Szasz and R. D. Laing: madness as a higher morality. He would not hold on to these notions for long.

In describing what happened to him, Vonnegut is admirably generous and discreet toward those around him, and unsparing with himself. I don't mean to suggest that he blames himself—it was one of the central lessons of this trip that blame doesn't quite apply.



Mark Vonnegut

Diagnosticians from afar who would explain the case in terms of a father-son relationship won't find much evidence here, and they ought to be impressed by the calm mixture of reticence and plain speech that young Vonnegut brings to the subject of his father, whose fame, of course, complicated his son's life. (Among his hippie friends only first names were used, but Mark was habitually introduced as "Mark Vonnegut.") There is a touching imaginary dialogue between father and son (Mark is in a hallucinatory state), in which the elder Vonnegut says: "Don't you see I'm responsible for all this pain you're going through? How can you not hate me?" And the son hears himself replying: "If you weren't the fifteenth joker through here in the last few hours trying to claim responsibility for the hell I'm in, I might be able to take you more seriously. I admit you've got a better case than most. A lot of what's

going on certainly has your flavor to it, but there are plenty of others who have a reasonable case. . . ."

The best energy of this book goes not toward analysis but toward description of his sickness and recovery. He gazes at himself when others would look away: helpless in both euphoria and despair, unable to eat, sobbing, hallucinating, in the grip, finally, of terrifying fantasies of omnipotence and guilt.

In the telling he can bring a certain wry sense to the awfulness. And at the same time he can make a moment meant for black comedy seem unfunny and real, as when he recalls himself staring at a psychiatrist's gold tie clip, certain it was a device to end the world.

Vonnegut was institutionalized twice. The first time he was apparently discharged too early, and with inadequate supervision. The second time he was helped. Brought down by Thorazine, he was kept stable partly by drugs, but also by diet, vitamin therapy, and a disciplined schedule. This doesn't work for all schizophrenics, but it worked for Vonnegut, and it's not surprising that he's a convert to the view that holds schizophrenia to be a biochemical disorder. His assertions on this point will upset a lot of psychiatrists, but the book shouldn't be read in a literal-minded way. To point out that there may be many explanations for schizophrenia (and that they may be simultaneously correct) is not to diminish the force of the memoir. The importance of the book lies in what Vonnegut learned from his misery.

At the center of his knowledge is a new view of craziness, stripped of its moral content, neither a stigma nor a badge, de-romanticized. In an epilogue, Vonnegut writes a letter to a friend who fears the onset of mental illness: ". . . your mental health is not dependent on the moral, socio-political health of the world. Thank God for little things like that. It also means that getting well doesn't involve our becoming any less angry with things as they are."

Not profound? No, but hard-earned, necessary knowledge. And if it seems trivial, consider the countless parents whose children are flirting with craziness, who would give anything to express those sentiments convincingly.

Two books: a novel and a memoir; one art, the other nearly artless. What they share is a willingness to look madness in the eye, not as a conceit but as an actuality. At some point while

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reading them I was reminded of a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, called "The Lost Decade." It's about two men, one of whom has been drunk, "every which-way drunk," for ten years. After hearing this tale, the alcoholic's companion starts to walk down the street and then he pauses: "He felt suddenly of the texture of his own coat and then he reached out and pressed his thumb against the granite of the building by his side." Both these books, disparate as they are in accomplishment and intent, make you grateful for the feel of something solid.

—Richard Todd

SHORT REVIEWS

WASHINGTON JOURNAL

by Elizabeth Drew

Random House, \$12.95

Archaeologists of the distant future, when they come across yellowed pages and crumbling videotapes of the 1970s A.D., may conclude that Americans of that era had adapted from the Chinese a fiendish practice known as the Water-gate Torture. How many books and treatises on the late great crisis in American political life will be awaiting excavation by latter-day Dead Sea Scrolls searchers no man can predict. This one, by an intrepid Washington reporter with an excellent eye and ear for the way Washington works, would help the historians understand just what the major, and many of the minor, players were doing and thinking in the eleven months, September, 1973, to August, 1974, in which the political process carried Richard Nixon to his downfall.

—Robert Manning

RESIGNATION IN PROTEST

by Edward Weisband and

Thomas M. Franck

Grossman/Viking, \$10.00

The authors, professors who have written several books on political and international affairs, call this work a study of "political and ethical choices between loyalty to team and loyalty to conscience in American public life." They conclude mournfully that in gov-

ernment, loyalty to team (meaning the President) almost invariably wipes out loyalty to conscience. If high-ranking government officials (assistant secretaries upward) who disagree with a President's policies would go public by resigning and broadcasting their opposition—preferably on the front page of the *New York Times*—a tragedy like the Vietnam adventure or a Constitution-shivering scandal like Watergate might never have happened. So Professors Weisband and Franck argue.

In raising the question of why few men in public life sound off against the Presidents who appoint them, the book sets out toward a useful purpose. Of 389 cases of resignations by high-ranking officials in the first seventy years of the twentieth century, the authors find that only thirty-four spoke out publicly against policies they considered wrong and in many instances dangerous for the country. Those statistics may be startling, but they are exasperatingly inconclusive. There is little evidence that the public resigners succeeded in inhibiting or reversing the policies they opposed, and the reader seemingly is asked to assume that things would have worked out differently if all 389 officials had "blown the whistle" as they cleaned out their desks and departed.

Weisband and Franck, with a comparable study of seventy-eight resignations of high British officials over the same seven decades, endeavor to offer a constructive contrast with the American system, but it is difficult to demonstrate that the British parliamentary system has produced better results in this regard than the American experience. They do not argue that we would be better off with the parliamentary system—not exactly—but they travel a long step in that direction when they propose to exchange our admittedly unsatisfactory state of affairs with a proposal that many readers will find naïve, simplistic.

One of the problems with American government, a constitutional "omission" that Madison, were he alive today, would strive to correct, is that there is no system of checks and balances built into the executive branch. Presidential appointees too often are lawyers and Wall Streeters and corporation executives who, by class status and/or breeding, believe in "playing the game" in private. What is needed instead, the book argues, is more politicians, men who have demonstrated the ability to get elected to responsibility. The Consti-

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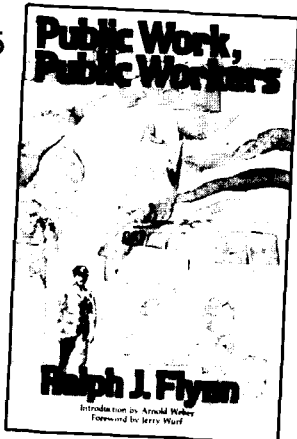


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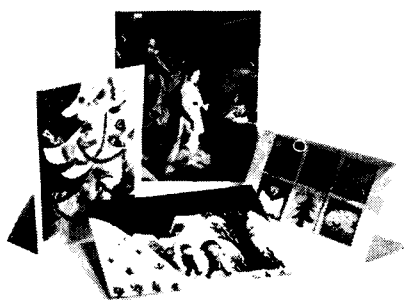
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tution should be amended to require that Cabinet secretaries and other top officers of the executive branch be selected only from among the seated representatives and senators of the U.S. Congress. How a Carl Albert or a Mike Mansfield would prove to be a better Secretary of State or Defense than a Henry Stimson or a George Marshall the authors wisely do not attempt to say.

It is irritating, incidentally, to be told that Weisband and Franck have studied and "gathered extensive biographical data" on more than one hundred officials who resigned in disagreement in the decade 1960-1970 and not to be told their names or the policies they opposed.

Though it is a severely flawed book, if *Resignation in Protest* helps to induce more sophisticated contemplation of how to make the President and his chosen lieutenants more forthright and accountable, it will have performed a public service.

—R. M.

**A DOVE OF THE EAST and Other Stories
by Mark Helprin
Knopf, \$6.95**

This collection brings to mind a workbasket full of pretty projects, all unfinished. The author affects a dreamy, antique style for the telling of his wispy romances, then turns most of them into shaggy-dog stories by refining atmosphere at the expense (nearly total) of plot and characterization. There's a fatiguing sameness of tone throughout, though the settings are ambitiously diverse. It appears that Helprin is striving for loveliness above all else, a tasteful but hardly compelling goal for a teller of tales.

—Amanda Heller

**BEYOND THE BEDROOM WALL
by Larry Woiwode**

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$12.50

Here is another ambitious project, but in this case ambition is met with success. Fragments of the book have been appearing independently as short stories for the past several years; it is surprising to see them come together with such impressive effect. This is the chronicle of several generations of an American family in its passage from North Dakota farmland to the small towns of Illinois to the cities of the Midwest and beyond. The events of the

novel are the very ordinary ones of every family's existence—the births, deaths, marriages, the growing up. Woiwode evokes each moment in language of pure, cleanly wrought beauty until it is made to seem both universal and extraordinary. At one point, a character recalls her mother churning butter, making beds, and she sees "how these simple acts were given dignity and significance" by her mother's hand. Though the phrase applies to housework, it can just as well be invoked to describe the deeply affecting art of *Beyond the Bedroom Wall*.

—A. H.

**I WOULD HAVE SAVED THEM
If I Could**

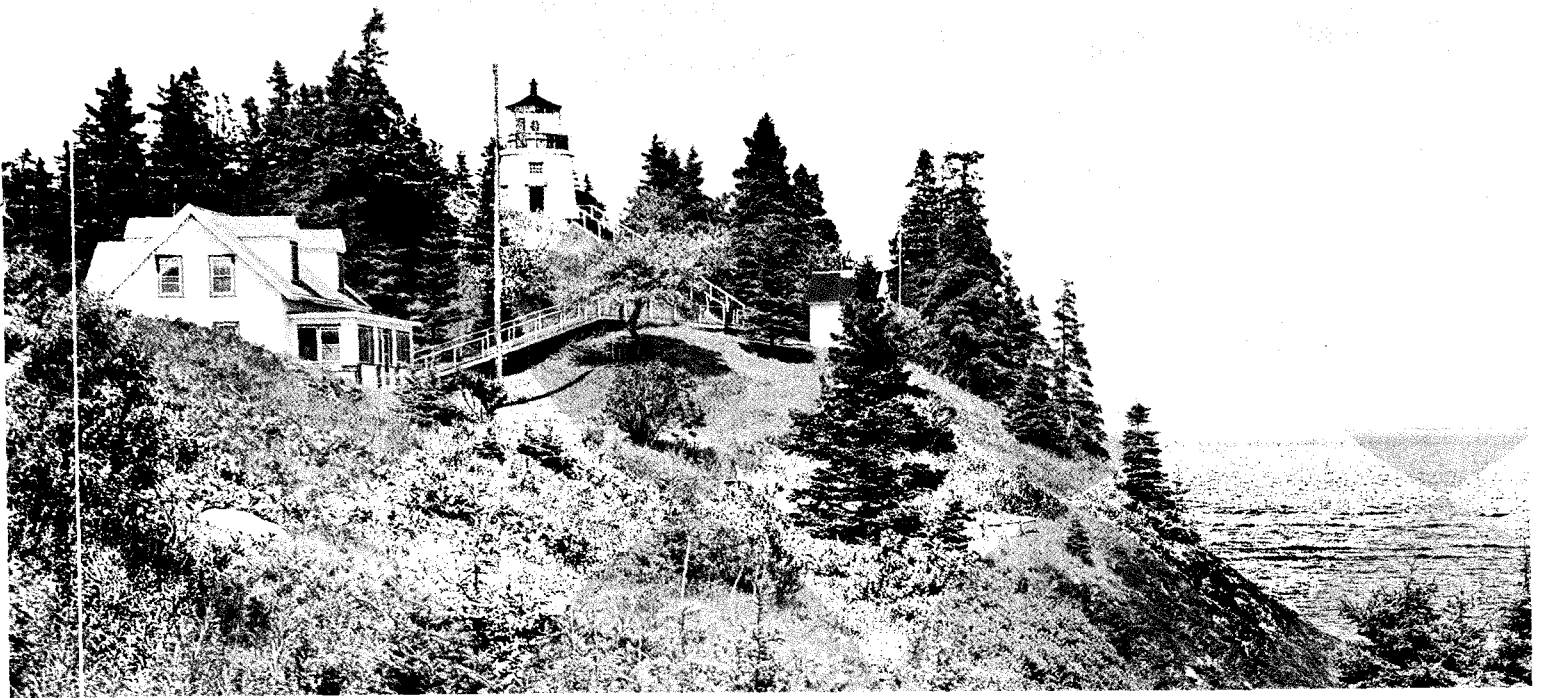
by Leonard Michaels

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$7.95

Leonard Michaels has crossed the novel with the short story to produce *I Would Have Saved Them If I Could*, a collection of stories and vignettes involving a recurring cast of characters, formed by a single, disturbing sensibility. The book's godparents are Donald Barthelme and Philip Roth. The setting is familiar—that surrealistic cityscape of modern fiction where people are obsessed by sex and violence, haunted by the ghosts of Freud and Marx.

To some extent, the book's effects are simply flashy. One piece pays homage to Borges so efficiently that there's hardly any Michaels in it. Others wield a powerful, manic prose that extorts attention by brute force. "The Captain," for example, is a nearly sadistic depiction of Manhattan's sleek party-goers and party-givers. Michaels makes it impossible to see through the carnage to the motives behind it. By contrast, "In the Fifties" is a piece that works by quiet intensity. It makes fiction with minimal materials, merely listing with apparent randomness moments from the narrator's life in the decade of his coming of age. He recalls living on the margins of art and radicalism; some friends have committed suicide, he has heard of orgies. We sense in his tone both passive contempt and nostalgic longing for the days when living on the margins was enough, commitment was not required. "In the Fifties," with its suggestion that author and narrator are one and the same, is the most approachable in this intriguing, puzzling, and frequently unsettling work.

—A. H.



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HENRY JAMES LETTERS edited by **Leon Edel**. Harvard University Press, \$15.00. In this second volume of correspondence, which covers the years 1875-1883, James digs himself into London society (not without amusing reservations), goes happily mad over Italy, suffers the death of both his parents, and falls out with brother William over the settlement of the estate. Gossipy, detailed, exuberant, or suavely malicious, the James letters continue to present a splendid picture of the writer and his times. Chronology, index, notes.

EVENINGLAND/AFTONLAND by **Pär Lagerkvist**, translated by **W. H. Auden and Leif Sjöberg**. Wayne State University Press, \$12.95. Mr. Sjöberg provided literal, line-by-line translations of Lagerkvist's poems, most of which Auden then converted into very free English blank verse. The result is poetry which offers few memorable lines or phrases, but produces a strong overall effect. Throughout *Aftonland*, Lagerkvist examined man's dependence on, relationship to, and yearning for a god who "perhaps, after all . . . does not exist." This is a lonely stand for a poet; even the shortest poems are icily monumental. The book includes the Swedish text, Mr. Sjöberg's useful comments on Lagerkvist and his work, a "thumbnail sketch of Swedish poetry" which is so thoroughly thumbnail as to baffle the uninitiated, and the poems never reworked by Auden. These last prove, in case anyone doubts it, that Auden's contribution to the project was indispensable.

DANCERS IN THE SCALP HOUSE by **William Eastlake**. Viking, \$8.95. Almost anyone can start a fantasy, but it takes an accomplished writer to end one successfully. Mr. Eastlake pulls the trick off, shifting smoothly from mordantly funny satire on technological progress to a moving lament for the land and people it destroys.

THE SEARCH FOR BIGFOOT by **Peter Byrne**. Acropolis, \$8.95. He has not yet caught a Bigfoot, but Mr. Byrne has netted all the available information, early and recent, on this problematical

Kilroy, and presents it with engaging enthusiasm. One can only wish him well and hope he bags the creature. Photographs.

WILLARD AND HIS BOWLING TROPHIES by **Richard Brautigan**. Simon and Schuster, \$5.95. Mr. Brautigan strings together some outlandish episodes to demonstrate that the world is full of misdirected violence. He must have been reading the papers.

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—Phoebe-Lou Adams

LIFE & LETTERS CONTRIBUTORS:

Andrew Ward is a free-lance writer living in New Haven.

Frank Rowsome, Jr. is the publications executive for NASA. His essay is drawn from his forthcoming book, *The Bright and Glowing Place*.

Benjamin DeMott is a regular contributor to these pages.

POETS IN THIS ISSUE

William Matthews (page 45) is poet in residence at the University of Colorado and author of *Sleek for the Long Flight*.

Richard Hugo (page 74) is the author of a new book of poems, *What Thou Lovest Well, Remains American*.

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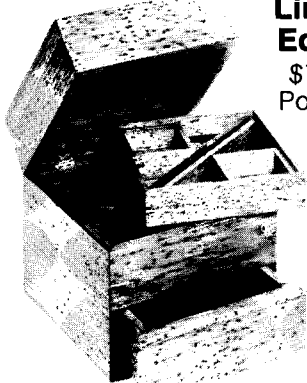
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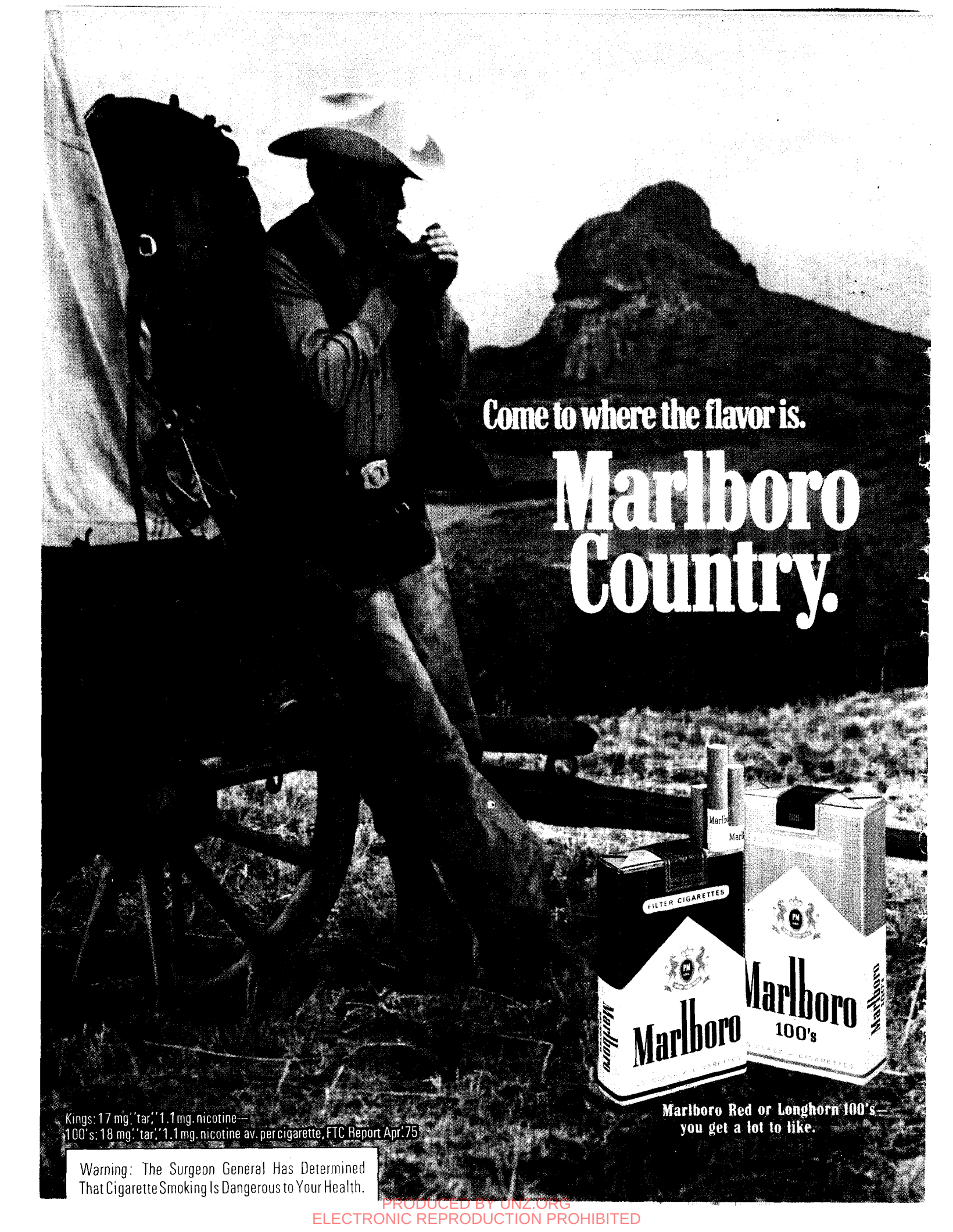
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